

QINGHAI'S RIVER SOURCE

- Exploring the Source of the Changjiang River
- The Spectacular Event of the Tibetan Horse Race Festival
- Tracing the Cultures of the Upper Huanghe

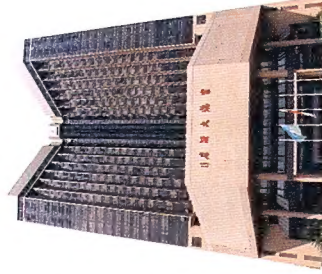


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EDITORIAL

Qinghai Province Revisited

Two years ago (Issue number 106) we explored Qinghai Province with a special feature on the search for the source of the Yellow River.

Now we return to Qinghai for another great adventure, this time exploring the source of the Changjiang, the great Yangtze.

The source lies high in Gêladaindong Mountain, at more than six thousand metres. This marshy terrain on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is the home of grazing yaks and horses and their nomadic Tibetan herders.

Qinghai offers far more, however, than even the majestic scenery of the Himalayas. Tibetans are long-time Buddhists, and the area is filled with temples, pagodas and relics created by the Buddhists of long ago. Because Tibetan Buddhism is an amalgam of the religious beliefs and arts of India, China and even Nepal, the ancient structures, statues and paintings are a fascinating blend of cultures and styles.

One such example is our story on Ragong art as seen at the Lower Wutun Lamasery. The origins of Ragong date back to the presence of Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) troops among the Tibetans of Qinghai. Even today, young boys are sent to the temple to learn both Buddhism and the arts during an eight to ten year apprenticeship. Also reflecting a multi-cultural influence is the bronzeware at Chalang Temple in Darlag near the upper reaches of the Yellow River. Some of the statuary dates back to the 8th century and the arrival in Tibet of the Buddhist master Padmasambhava.

The Chinese artistic tradition is strongly seen in the *thangkas*, Tibetan scroll paintings, found in our story on Xilai Temple. The scrolls, although Tibetan in concept, display a strong Chinese "literati" style that clearly identifies them as Chinese court paintings.

Our tour of Qinghai is not all artwork and scenery, however. As with any good tour, ours includes visits with local people, in this case at the annual Tibetan Horse Race Festival. Living in a colourful tent city built just for this gathering, these noted riders compete in events designed to show off their horsemanship to the fullest.

Front cover: Lighted tents, like golden lanterns, light the night at the Tibetan Horse Race Festival held in Yushu, Qinghai Province (by Zheng Yunfeng)



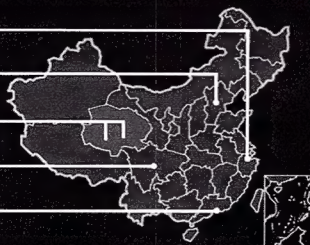
A Pilgrimage to Hangzhou

The Hometown of a Great Playwright

Qinghai's River Source

Mount Emei in the Snow

Thirteen Dynasties and Five Thousand Years



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China

PUBLISHER:

H.K. China Tourism Press
17/F., V. Heun Building
138 Queen's Road Central
Hong Kong
Tel: 541 1331
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Cable: HKCATMPS
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Trade Service Dept.: 541 1331

Photo Loan Dept.: 541 1331

Colour Separation: Goody Colour

Separation Ltd.

Printer: C & C Offset Printing Co. Ltd.

75 Pau Chung St., Kln., H.K.

Tel: 713 5175

AGENCIES:

Australia: Gordon and Gotch Ltd., 25-37 Huntingdale Road, Burwood, Victoria 3125

Belgiums: Sun Wah Supermarket

Brazil: Comercio Impotdora Konmin Ltda.

Canada: Sun Wa Bookstore, Toronto
Van China Trade Centre Ltd., Vancouver

China: China National Publications

Improt & Export Corp., Beijing

England: Guanghwa Company Ltd., London

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Malaysia: Pustaka Lively, Tawau, Sabah

Singapore: International Book(s) Pte. Ltd.

Thailand: Chew Hong Service Ltd., Bangkok

The Philippines: Good Quality Merchandising, Manila

U.S.A.: China Periodical Distribution, Los Angeles

Oriental Culture Enterprise Co., New York

China Daily Distribution Corp., New York

SUBSCRIPTION AGENCIES:

(Please refer to subscription data at back of book)

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Printed in Hong Kong

News-stand price: HK\$25

QINGHAI'S RIVER SOURCE

Qinghai — Mother of Rivers

Far to the west, in the sparsely populated mountains, lies Qinghai Province, birthplace of China's two great rivers — the Changjiang and the Huanghe.

China's longest river, the Changjiang (Yangtze River), originates in the Jianggendiru Glacier where the natural scenery is spectacular: in winter it is a world of ice and snow while in summer and autumn the grasslands below the snowline are covered with colourful flowers.

China's second largest rivers the Huanghe (Yellow River), originates in two separate sources, the Karqu River in the northern Bayanhar Mountains and the Yoigilanglèb Basin in central Qinghai. The two sources then join to form the Marqu River, the very first part of the Huanghe. Marqu in Tibetan means the "Peacock River" and it is well named. At the meeting point of the two sources are numerous small springs that sparkle in a myriad of colours resembling the spreading tail of a peacock.

These two rivers, Changjiang and Huanghe, are the two great cradles of Chinese civilization. The areas upstream of Changjiang in Qinghai are very remote and definitely not the easiest place to travel. Our special correspondents first travelled to the source of the Changjiang, joining the fun of a Tibetan horse race. Then they followed the beginnings of the Huanghe downstream to bring our readers the wonderful cultures along this river.





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Liuwan Mausoleum

瞿曇寺
Qutan Temple

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Ledu

西寧
Xining

化隆
Hualong

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Minhe

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同仁
Tongren

貴南
Guinan

同德
Tongde

五屯寺
Wutun Lamasery

河南
Henan

Yellow River 黃河
Mts. A'nyemaqen

阿尼瑪卿山

甘德
Gadê

達日
Darlag

久治
Jigzhi

班瑪
Baima

色達
Sêtar

四川
SICHUAN

Jinsha River 金沙江

青海
QINGHAI

約古宗列曲
Yoigilanglêb River
扎陵湖
Gyaring Lake
星宿海
Xingxiu Lake
卡日曲
Kar River

Mts. Bayan

瑪多
Madoi

鄂陵湖
Ngoring Lake

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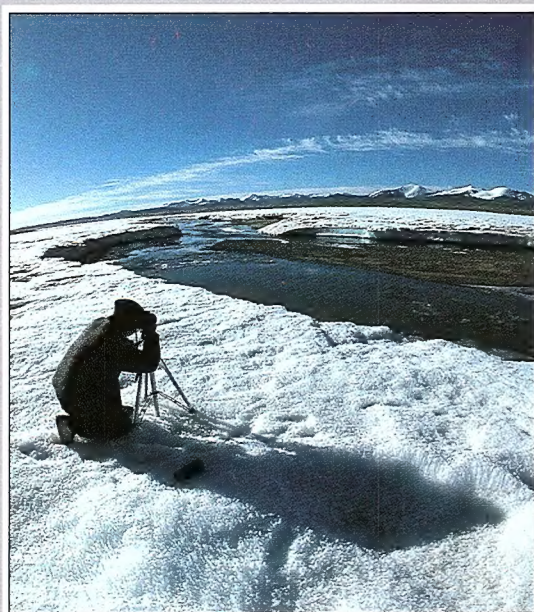
The route of our journey along the two rivers' sources in Qinghai

Exploring the Source of the Changjiang River

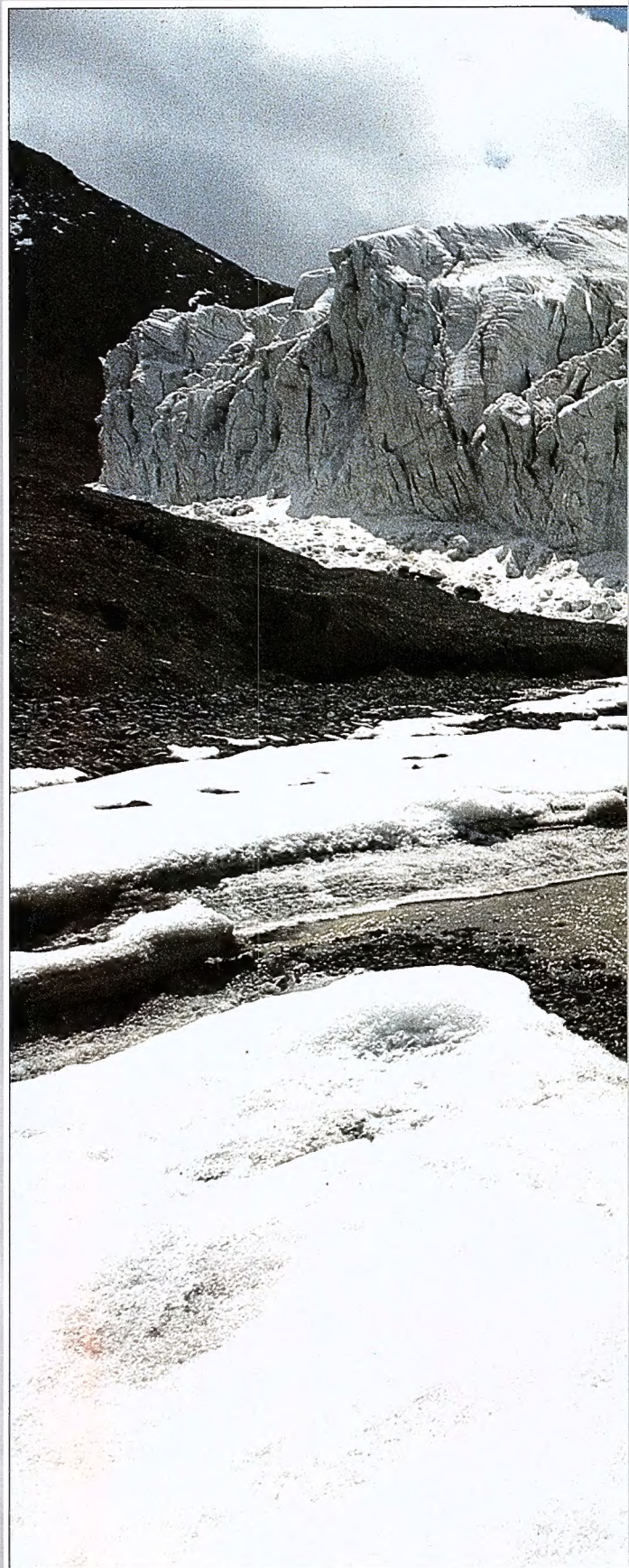
PHOTOS & ARTICLE BY ZHENG YUNFENG



The name of the Changjiang (Yangtse River) first appeared in the *Book of Odes*, which is the earliest collection of songs and poems in Chinese literature. "Torrential are the Jiang and Han, main threads of the southern land." At its source in the Jianggendiru Glacier high on the south side of the snow-capped Gêladaindong Mountain, it is known as the Tuotuo River. It flows from this northwestern corner of Qinghai Province from the main peak of the Tanggula Range, changes its name to the Tongtian, then to the Jinsha after it has passed through Yushu County, and becomes the well-known Changjiang only after it has



Because of the frigid winter weather, the only suitable time to explore the source of the Changjiang is during the summer, from May to September, when the glaciers melt and the water flows in the Tuotuo River, which is the beginning of the Changjiang.





We arrived in the area in mid-June, but the weather was still quite cold. During the night, temperatures can drop to around -10°C, but during the day, the sun melts the glaciers into icy streams.

coursed through Yibin in Sichuan Province. It holds on to the same name, Changjiang, until it completes its 6,300-kilometre journey and empties itself into the Yellow Sea.

Its source in a glacier on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau is at an altitude of 6,621 metres, and with atmospheric pressure at only 60 per cent, the oxygen content is only 57 per cent of that at sea level. Winter predominates and can last from September to May, making the entire place a vast expanse of white earth and icebound rivers. Even during the summer season, the wintry temperatures prevail with 0°C as an average. Unpredictable windstorms can gather dark clouds and for a time rain or sleet will lash down, but never for long, and soon the clear bright sky appears again. Thunder and hail are summertime features and there is the local phenomenon of "thunder rolling on the ground". Lightning suddenly rolls down the mountainside as a fiery red ball with deafening thunderclaps. Fortunately it is a rare occurrence!

It is not surprising, given the climatic conditions of this high terrain, that the source of the Changjiang remains practically unexplored. So last June, my friend and I, accompanied by a Tibetan guide, took on the challenge of spending fourteen days and nights in this inhospitable environment.

Cold Days in June

At daybreak on 16 June we rose and packed our belongings, leaving the Tuotuo River Guesthouse. We drove from Tangulashan township in southwestern Qinghai southwards along the Qinghai-Tibet Highway to reach our destination by two o'clock in the afternoon. The previous day we had arranged to meet our guide at this spot, and there he was waiting by the side of the road, complete with horses, yaks and the provisions we needed. In a very short time we had arranged ourselves and our belongings, and our small caravan of three horses and six yaks left the highway on our trek towards the source of the Changjiang.

We made our way to the west, walking on the lush green grass along the Nianyanqu, a tributary of the Biqu River. The ice in the river was just thawing, although it was the middle of June. In central China, people would be wearing only vests and shorts, while here we were still feeling the chill of early spring and wearing woollens and eiderdown jackets. At sunset, we pitched our tent on some flat ground by the river and our guide proceeded to prepare milky tea. It was half past ten in the evening, Beijing time, when we had finished our meal, the time difference lagging two hours behind. But we were tired and we wiggled into our sleeping-bags to spend our first night at the upper reaches of the Changjiang.

We awoke in the morning to find the earth a beautiful yellow-green blanket stretching off into the distance and a flock of antelope quietly grazing on the slopes. We broke this peaceful silence by noisily urging our yaks to climb a 500-metre hill, from the top of which we viewed an expanse of low-lying, water-logged grassy marsh. The marsh forms because the layer of earth above the permafrost breaks up as it thaws during the summer, and when it freezes again during the winter, it



The Tibetans living in the area are all excellent riders who can withstand the extremely thin air.

We visited the home of our guide, shown here with his father and son. He knows the area so well that he acted as guide for the largest Chinese team to explore the source of the Changjiang.





Highway workers melt asphalt for use in repairing the road where we met our guide to begin our journey on the Qinghai-Tibet Highway.

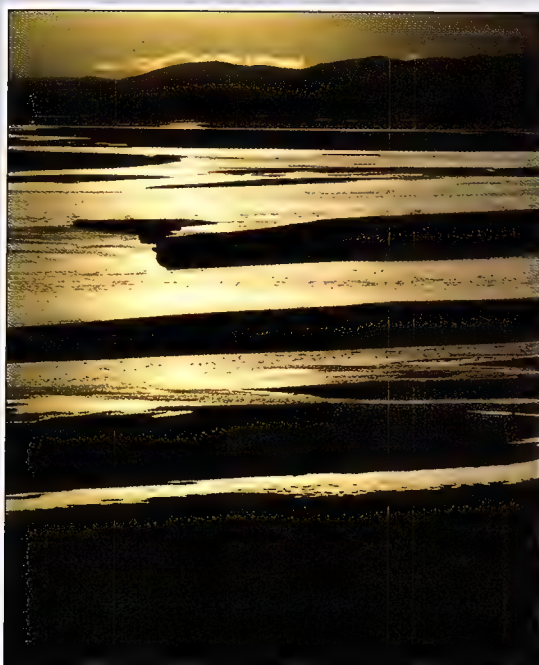
breaks even further into uneven grassy clumps. During the summer thaw, the tussocks of grass are left surrounded by water, which, not having any other place to flow, remains there to become the grassy marshland. The air here was very fresh and the blue sky overhead was so clear that its reflection on the water changed the earth into a blue ocean. From our viewpoint on the hill we began our descent.

The Marshland

Our animals were, of course, accustomed to negotiating this kind of terrain. They snorted and leaped from one tussock to the next, precisely selecting their next move on this chess board. At first, we felt nervous for fear they might slip, tumbling us into the brackish water, but soon we got used to the bumpy ride and felt a little more confident. However, as the terrain became more and more difficult, the two yaks leading the way sank deep into a muddy pool. They struggled for a while and manged to free themselves only to cause a commotion among the other yaks who, sensing their fear, became alarmed and ran amok. We learned that these summer quagmires can be as deep as one or two metres and failure to extricate oneself immediately can result in rapid submersion. Our guide instantly ordered us to turn back to safety where we rested while he looked around for another route.

From our vantage point we took the opportunity to note the different kinds of plants covering the marshes. There were yellow primula, purple gentian (*Gentiana scabra*) and an alpine called *Pedicularis resupinata* growing in profusion. The flowers sparkled in the sunshine. This effect was caused by the light reflecting on the beads of moisture collected on their hairy stems, which are an adaptation peculiar to this environment. The plants absorb the necessary moisture from the air as the sun evaporates the waters in the bogs surrounding the tussocks on which they grow.

Presently, our guide returned and advised us to proceed cautiously on foot, leading the animals around



We pitched our tents by the Tuotuo River which is covered with a golden and mysterious shroud in the disappearing sun.

We had to cross an immense stretch of water-logged grassy marsh. Despite our animals, who can usually select the safest tussock to land on, occasional problems still occur.



the lower slopes of the hills. As the crow flies, this marshland is only 1,000 metres across, yet it took us three long hours to reach the next place of safety. By then, it was already six in the evening and both man and beast were showing signs of exhaustion. We gulped at the rare air as we pitched our tents for the night. Our guide informed us that after two more hills and one more marshland, four to five kilometres west of our campsite, the Gêladaindong Peak would be visible. It was with this thought we drifted off into a welcome sleep.

The next day we started before dawn, and by day-break we had conquered another hill and were successfully on our way towards yet another. Then our guide pointed out the snow-capped peak of Gêladaindong in the western distance. The eastern side of the Gêladaindong feeds a dozen or so glaciers and at the foot of the mountain lay a triangular shape. Here, water gushes through the layers of ice to form seven or eight streams which converge in the northeast before forming a narrow valley over ten kilometres long and some two to three hundred metres wide. The water continues to flow east and enters the Garqu to the west of the Biqu, finally flowing northeast into the Tongtian.

The Tibetan Antelope

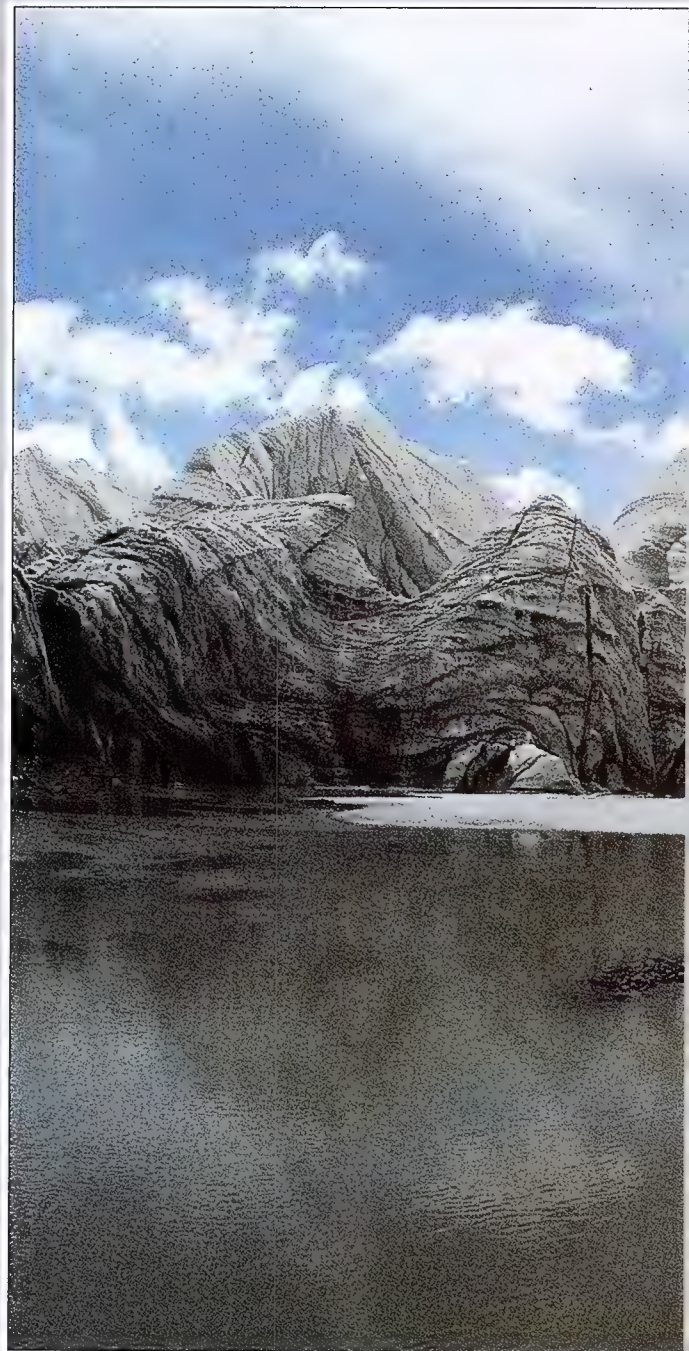
The date was 19 June and it was the fourth day of travel to the source of the Changjiang. Rolling dark clouds filled the sky and we were beginning to feel the effects of the thinner air. We swayed dizzily on the horses' backs, crossing one hill after another. Suddenly, the monotony was broken by a flock of antelope running towards us from a low-lying valley about twenty metres away. As soon as they saw us, they stopped abruptly, then, alarmed, turned tail and ran back like a streak of lightning.

The antelopes have a body as long as one metre and can run as swiftly as a 'good horse'. They are nicknamed by the local people, "Champions of the long distance race". They also say that they are able to run so fast because of a strange anatomical feature which pumps air into their legs and propels them forward at a greater speed.

The fifth day of our journey proved to be a most dangerous experience. As we climbed higher, we were more and more feeling the effects of the high altitude as well as the physical exertion needed for trekking across such tough and demanding terrain. But what worried us more was the growing fatigue of our animals. The white yak which I was now riding was so tired that it refused to negotiate many of the muddy pools we encountered, and there was nothing I could do but dismount and lead the animal forward.

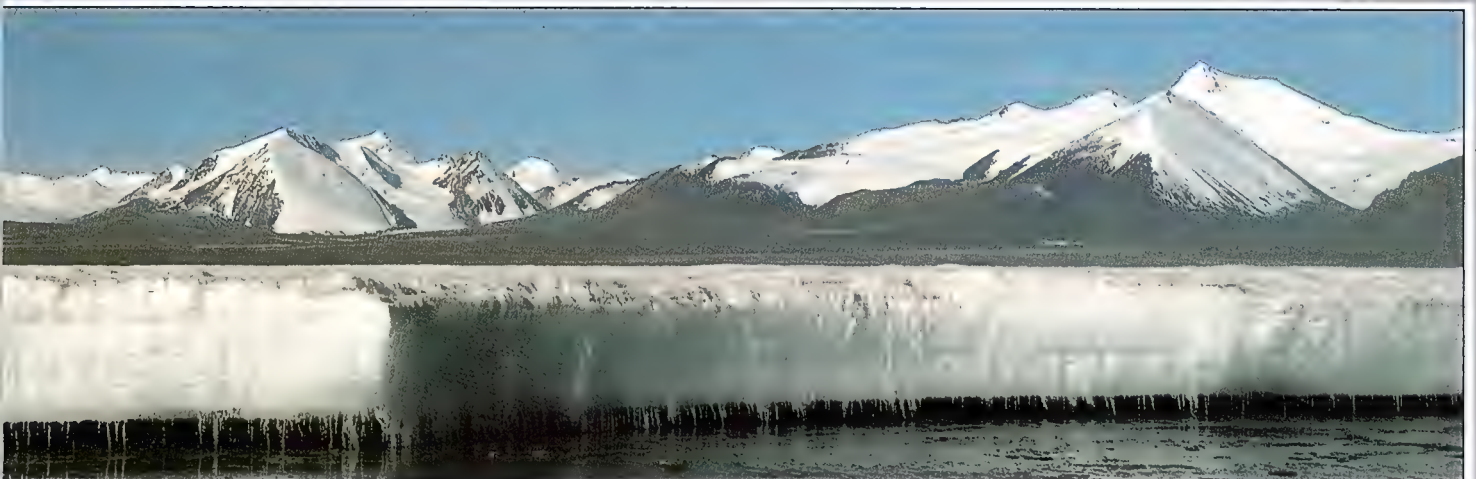
By noon, just after we had crossed another hill, some of the horses and yaks got stuck in a muddy pool and started to sink. They struggled in their fright, but with the help of our guide we hauled them free. This very muddy patch took us two hours to negotiate and we had covered only an area of 200 metres! And then, in praise of all our struggles, came the applause of a long roll of thunder, followed by a downpour of icy rain. We inched forward, shivering and blue with cold.

My mount was probably very old and weak and soon we lagged behind the others. At one point its front hooves got stuck in the mud and, as it jerked back in an effort to free itself, I was thrown and landed in the mud



Further upstream we found ourselves in the snowy land of the Gêladaindong Mountains. The ice formed in winter was steadily melting, with some of the ice flowing into the Naqin River.

On our sixth day, we travelled alongside the Naqin River and onto this beautiful moraine lake surrounded on three sides by glaciers.



too. I gripped the rein and was dragged about two metres before I started to lose consciousness. I was rescued by our guide who noticed my absence. He helped me remount and we continued our journey through the endless marshlands.

Arriving at the Source

On our sixth day we travelled upstream alongside the Naqinqu. Na is a Tibetan word meaning *pit*, and Naqinqu means "river water flowing out of a pit". At this point it was a flow of snow water coming from the mountains and glaciers on either side. Both of its grassy banks were cut with many mountain streams of snowy white water rushing to join the main concourse. We continued southwards to the Badong Mountain at the foot of the main peak of the Tanggula Range. The Badong Mountain is 5,700 metres above sea level, and although it is not the tallest of the mountains, it has the importance of being the site of the source of the Changjiang.

We skirted the foothills of the Badong Mountain and then proceeded to the southeast. Suddenly, we saw the Jianggendiru Glacier stretching in two strips to the huge frozen spring in the mountain valley, one to the north and one to the south. This was indeed the birth-place of the Changjiang, here in these imposing and beautiful surroundings. We had at last arrived at the source, and none of us could control the flow of emotion!

The Herdsmen

Early the next morning I emerged from my tent to find that snow had fallen during the night, covering everything with its glistening whiteness. After our meal, we rode out to take a look at the glacier from the south side. From the top of a ridge, we looked down and to our great surprise saw a cloud of smoke curling upwards. Through the mist we could distinguish a black yak-skin tent. We went forward to investigate, impatiently urging our horses on.

Our noise alarmed the dogs and their barking heralded our arrival. We were invited in to share some butter tea. The tent was the summer home of a family of seven from Ardo County in Tibet. They came each year to take advantage of the grazing grounds for their animals and the better water supply. They drive their herds of yaks the twenty-day journey to the county seat each year before winter sets in. There they stock up with provisions for the winter.

We told them tales of Beijing and how warm it was at this time of the year. They gave us looks of incredulity before leaving to tend the sheep. To herd them together, they use a long rope, weaving it round the neck of one sheep and then another until the whole flock is bound together. It is quite a trick to bind up a flock of some forty or fifty sheep with one single rope!

We watched the milking of the flock; first the ewe was hit on the rump as a signal that it was milking time. The milk poured into a small container made from yak horn and then was subsequently poured into a larger pail when the horn was full. I watched the eldest son milk the flock before returning to the tent to say our goodbyes and prepare for the journey back.

Translated by Ren Jiazhen

Beneath the Jianggendiru Glacier, we came upon the only Tibetan family living in the area. They treated us to tea and, with some help from our guide, we all had a friendly chat.



This family of herders consists of two sons and three daughters who help their parents look after the livestock.





Yaks are the major means of transportation on the plateau. They carry back from faraway forests shrubs more than a metre tall. The Tibetans plant them around their tents, reinforcing them with soil to prevent damage and loss from the violent wind.

When summer comes, this family will take their herds of yaks and sheep upstream along the Tuotuo River to live on this fertile land.

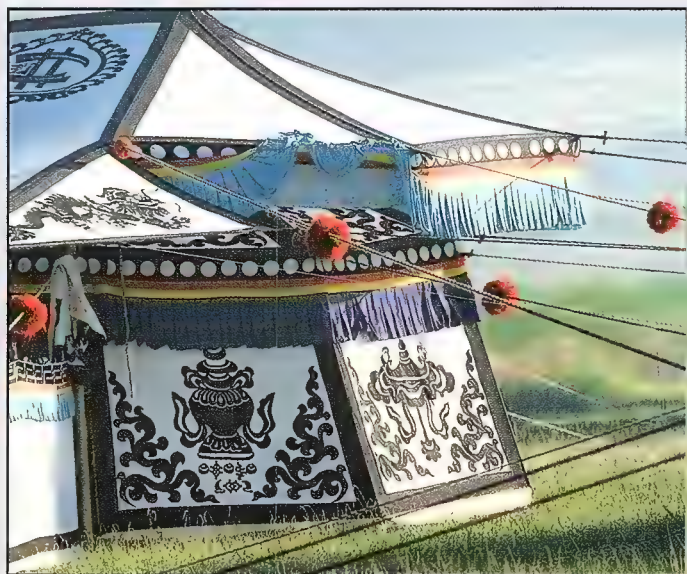


The Spectacular Event of the Tibetan Horse Race Festival

PHOTOS & ARTICLE BY ZHENG YUNFENG

Three kilometres west of Qinghai's Gyêgu township a large number of people gathered together under the warm July sun to celebrate the annual Tibetan Horse Race Festival. Gyêgu (or Yushu) is the capital of the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, and it is here, starting on 25 July, that the local people hold this annual seven to ten day event.

Horse racing was always one of the Tibetans' traditional summer entertainments, but the Yushu Horse Race Festival is larger and richer than most others. So I was more than pleased to be able to join in the fun!



Yushu's tent city is an exhibition of pattern art, with each pattern having a different meaning.



Obscured by smoke, this grassland west of Gyêgu is covered with prettier and more colourful tents than that of other race venues.

The "palace tent" is a sign of authority and wealth. It is equipped with carpets, bed and bedding, food and drink for the family as well as for their guests.



Most of the participants spend their nights in tents put up just for the festival.



The horse may look a bit uncertain, but its master is showing enough confidence for both of them that they may win.

Costumes were bright and colourful, enhancing the slow dances with grace and the more light-hearted dances with the swirling of long sleeves floating through the air. The dancers kept the rhythm with singing and the playing of folk instruments such as hand drums, trumpets fashioned from the horns of oxen, bronze bells and fiddles.

Today in Tibet a religious dance called *qamo* (a sorcerer's dance) is also performed alongside the folk dances, and so it was at the festival. As the slow music of the *qamo* was played, lamas wearing masks performed "Dance of the Gods in Heaven", and the "Skeleton Dance in Hell", portraying images of religious leaders or heroes from historical tales.

The Tents of the Festival

People came from all over the region to participate in the festival, but not all of them lodged at the inns in this old township. Many merely pitched temporary tents, creating a white city on the green grasslands.

I was exhausted after spending more than half the day on the festival grounds and soon found myself searching for a place to rest. When I saw

the largest tent, I hoped that I had found the place I had been looking for. This tent was large enough to hold about five hundred people. However, it turned out to be an exhibition hall filled with literary and artistic works. This huge tent, called the *gemaogje* (Grand Tent), was the centre of the festival. As well as an exhibition hall, it was used as a place for holding meetings and banquets. On an otherwise quiet night, I was told it might even be used as a disco!

According to descriptions in the Tibetan epic *Gesar*, the Grand Tent was at one time a place for generals to discuss military strategy, to eat and drink and to celebrate their victories. After the introduction of Buddhism, the tent was used for preaching and prayers. Therefore, it became a platform for both the military and Buddhist services and accordingly acted as a symbol of authority in both spheres.

Other tents were the temporary homes of lamas who were invited to the festival to chant sutras to ward off evil spirits and to obtain blessings of peace and safety. These tents were especially prepared for the lamas according to their requirements. For example, the colours are the sombre colours of the monastery and the



Discussing photography with the lama are two American Buddhist nuns who were sent here by their master.

Bottom: At night, from a distance, the grassland glows with the lights from countless tents.

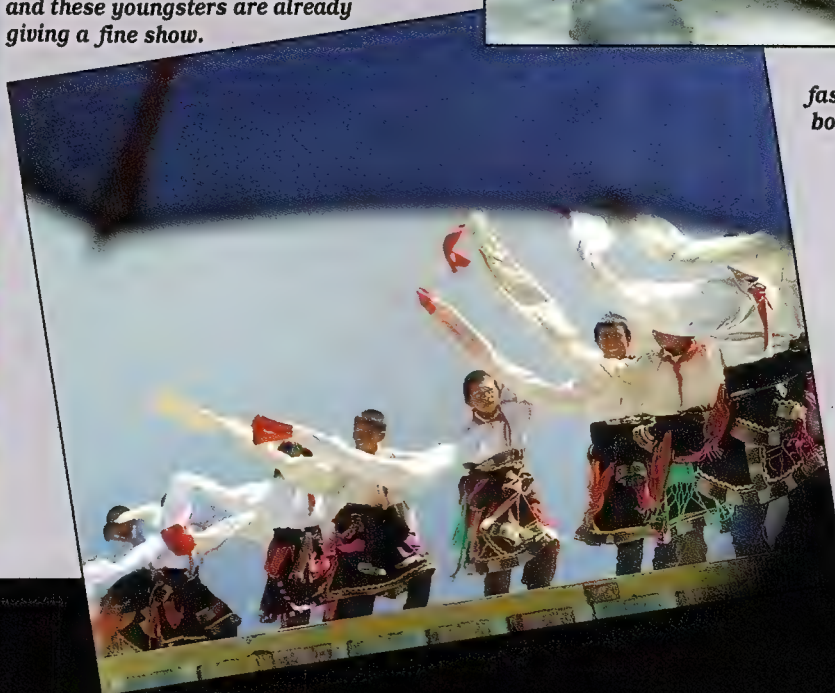




Almost any Tibetan can sing and dance, and these youngsters are already giving a fine show.



Bronze bells are fastened onto the men's boots to add music and zest to their dances and movements.



The festival opened with a ceremony called *weisang*. When the signal was given, an enormous pile of cypress branches in the middle of the arena was set alight, and when the smoke rose, the riders waiting around the edges quickly mounted their horses and galloped towards the fire. They raced round and round it, causing the smoke and dust to spiral upwards in clouds. *Weisang* has its origins in Bon, a religion of the early Tibetans. It was held to offer sacrifices to the tribal gods before going into battle to ensure a triumphant return.

Now the Horse Race Festival could actually begin. There were competitions in long-distance racing, archery and gunmanship, acrobatics and a *hata* picking contest. This was great fun to watch. The riders galloped along a path lined with *hata*s or long streamers of white silk. The aim was to pick up as many as possible without stopping or slowing down.

When the contest began, I watched several horsemen race past, spurring their horses' flanks to make them gallop even faster. As they rode by, I could hear the tinkling sound of the bronze bells on the riders' boots. Each rider picked up a silk streamer from the ground and lifted it over his head. From a distance the scarves looked like white billowing clouds on the horizon.

Shooting from Horseback

Next, a contingent of cavalry appeared, dressed like the soldiers of the Tubo, a Tibetan regime of ancient China. They were armed with bows and arrows. Only when the riders reached a

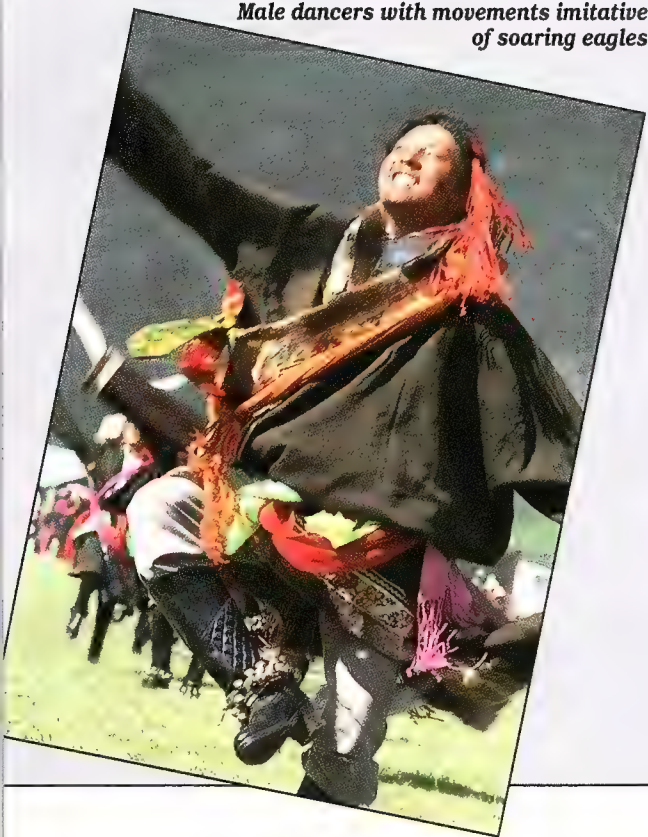


One of the Tibetan traditional performances is the Snow Lion Dance which is based on the story of two Qing officials who presented the Tibetan people with a snow lion.



Standing up straight on a galloping horse, extracting the gun from the back and shooting at the target all seem so easy to these riders.

Male dancers with movements imitative of soaring eagles



full gallop did they take the arrows from their quivers, aim and shoot at the target. This game, called "archery on galloping horses", dates back to Tibet's ancient days.

Another group arrived wearing more modern dress and carrying rifles. They took them from their shoulders, raised them with their right hands and rotated them in a clockwise direction. Then, they passed them from one hand to the other behind their backs. They negotiated many such difficult manoeuvres with the rifles, displaying amazing skill and dexterity. For example, some even fired at the target by reaching down and aiming from under their horse's neck. The spectators applauded vigorously, for Tibetans love horsemanship. Horsemanship was used for war from the early times of Tubo when the Tibetan cavalry attacked the soldiers of the Tang Dynasty (618-907). Later, with the introduction of Buddhism, horsemanship became more peaceful and entertaining.

However, horses were not the only animals at the festival. There were also yaks, and yak racing is one of the festival's wildest events. Yaks are usually tame and make good pack animals, but on this occasion they seemed stubborn and refused to be led by the wooden ring through their nose. When they were herded into the arena for the start of the competition, some rebelled and would not move no matter what the riders did. Others started forward and then abruptly turned back right in the middle of the race. One yak became so nervous that it ran headlong into a crowd of startled spectators. The winner of the



Meanwhile these Tibetan girls flick their long sleeves and perform a gentle dance.

race may not have been the best yak there, but the man who reached the finish line still on its back was certainly the luckiest rider!

Singing and dancing competitions were also held at the festival and people from all over the region took part. Tibetan dances can be divided into four categories: *guoxie*, *zhuoxie*, *rapa* and *guowa*. *Guoxie* is a dance for pure enjoyment and is usually held at night. *Zhuoxie* is a more formal performance with its music more solemn and stately, yet with more vigorous and powerful movements than those used in the *guoxie*. I learned that each village in Yushu has a *zhuoxie* dance of its very own which is considered a village treasure. *Rapa* is a street dance performed by one or two families and is difficult to master. *Guowa* is performed by laymen to celebrate the arrival of a dignitary or high-ranking lama. In order to impress the guests, the dancers don their best costumes and put on their best performance.

The dances use movements based on those from everyday life, and activities like reaping, threshing, milking and carrying water were easily recognizable. Comical pantomimes of birds stretching out their wings and pecking for food kept the spectators doubled up with mirth.

Performers from a song dance ensemble waiting their turn



The lamas have their own tents which have become their lamaseries during the festival.



designs on the tents have religious and symbolic significance. Among the designs were patterns of auspicious knots, lotus flowers, canopies, whorls, rings, pennants, precious vases and goldfish. The door lintels were embroidered with lucky unicorns, Dharmacakra (the Wheel of Law) and the ten faces of leisure whose purpose is to divert disaster and encourage harmony and happiness.

The names and shapes of the various tents correspond with the function and status of their occupants. In addition to the Grand Tent and the lama tents, there were also tents for the officials and the elderly monks, kitchen tents, axe-shaped tents and the Mongolian tents. The sizes varied, with the Grand Tent holding about five hundred people and the smallest ones holding no more than two or three.

No matter how different they all were, each tent had the common decoration of a three-part coloured roof. The upper part had a white bead pattern, the middle had a rainbow pattern of red, yellow and green, and the lower part had a wide pleated fringe of blue. The blue edges of these eaves rose and fell in the light breeze and from the distance came the sound of horses' hooves. ☐

Translated by Wang Mingjie



QINGHAI'S RIVER SOURCE

Tracing the Cultures of the Upper Huanghe

From its source in Qinghai Province to the town of Hekou in Togtoh in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, the Huanghe (Yellow River) stretches for 3,472 kilometres. It is within this eastern section of the six counties of Qinghai Province, where the upper reaches of the Huanghe and its tributaries flow, that we investigated the unique cultural convergences of the region.

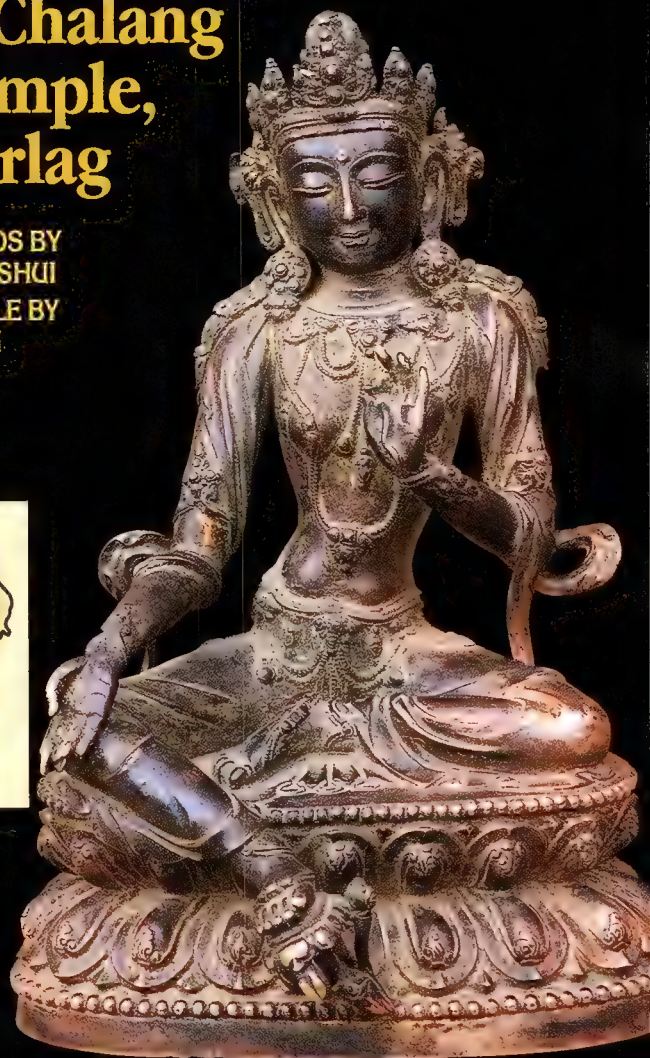
The area is rich with examples: in the Ta'er Temple in Huangzhong, the sorcerers' masks bear the same meticulous painting which is a common feature of masks found in other Tibetan lamaseries throughout Qinghai Province; the painted pottery of Liuwan in Ledu, although not Tibetan, demonstrates that more than 4,000 years ago in the Neolithic period there was evidence of human habitation; the scroll paintings in the Xilai Temple show the influence of the Han nationality from the Central Plains; and Tongren is the home of paintings displaying the artistic styles of India, Tibet and the Han nationality, all blending to form a new style.

In the southeastern part of Qinghai Province, the White Jade Temple is quite different from other Tibetan lamaseries, while the Buddhist pagodas at Baima have their own outstanding features and each has its own symbolic significance. With the spread of Buddhism into China from India, Nepal and Tibet, the bronze sculptures reflected the artistic styles of their origins, while others reflect the sculptural skills of the Han. A Tibetan sculptural style is to be seen in the bronze sculptures at Chalang Temple, Darlag. The blend of cultures makes this area unique, and this is reflected in the many art forms found here.



Bronzeware at Chalang Temple, Darlag

PHOTOS BY
GUAN SHUI
ARTICLE BY
BAI YU



It was during the 7th and 8th centuries that the Tibetan king Khri-sronldebsan sent envoys to India to invite the Nepalese Master Santaraksita to visit Tibet. Santaraksita was an orthodox teacher of the esoteric Mahayana Buddhism. Master Padmasambhava of the Red Sect was subsequently invited to teach the practices in Tibet. This made up the four sections of the esoteric school of Vajrayana Buddhism of India, including the highest stage of the Supreme Yoga of Tantrism. It was during this period that a number of Buddhist temples were built, and at the same time many Buddhist statues were imported from India and Nepal to be enshrined in the various temples.

This was the origin of some of the bronze statues housed in the Chalang Temple at Darlag in Qinghai Province. According to a very old lama at the temple, some of these sculptures were masterpieces of Tibetan artists and others were introduced after the completion of the building of the temple. However, they are all at least 1,000 years old!

The earliest bronze sculpture is the Buddha of the Future brought to the temple during the early period of the introduction of the esoteric school of Buddhism. Even though the climate of Qinghai Province is very dry and therefore presents favourable conditions for preservation, this sculpture has oxidized

to a dark blue colour, thereby testifying to its great age. Buddhist doctrine decrees that one thousand Buddhas will exist within the period of the emergence of mankind until its extinction. The Buddha of the Future is the fifth and a successor to Sakyamuni.

This sculpture shows many characteristics of Indian Buddhist art. The posture, the clothing and the liveliness of the modelling are examples. The Buddha is lowering his brows and nodding, and although he looks worried, he still maintains a benign attitude. The lotus base on which he is seated is also sculpted in an Indian style.

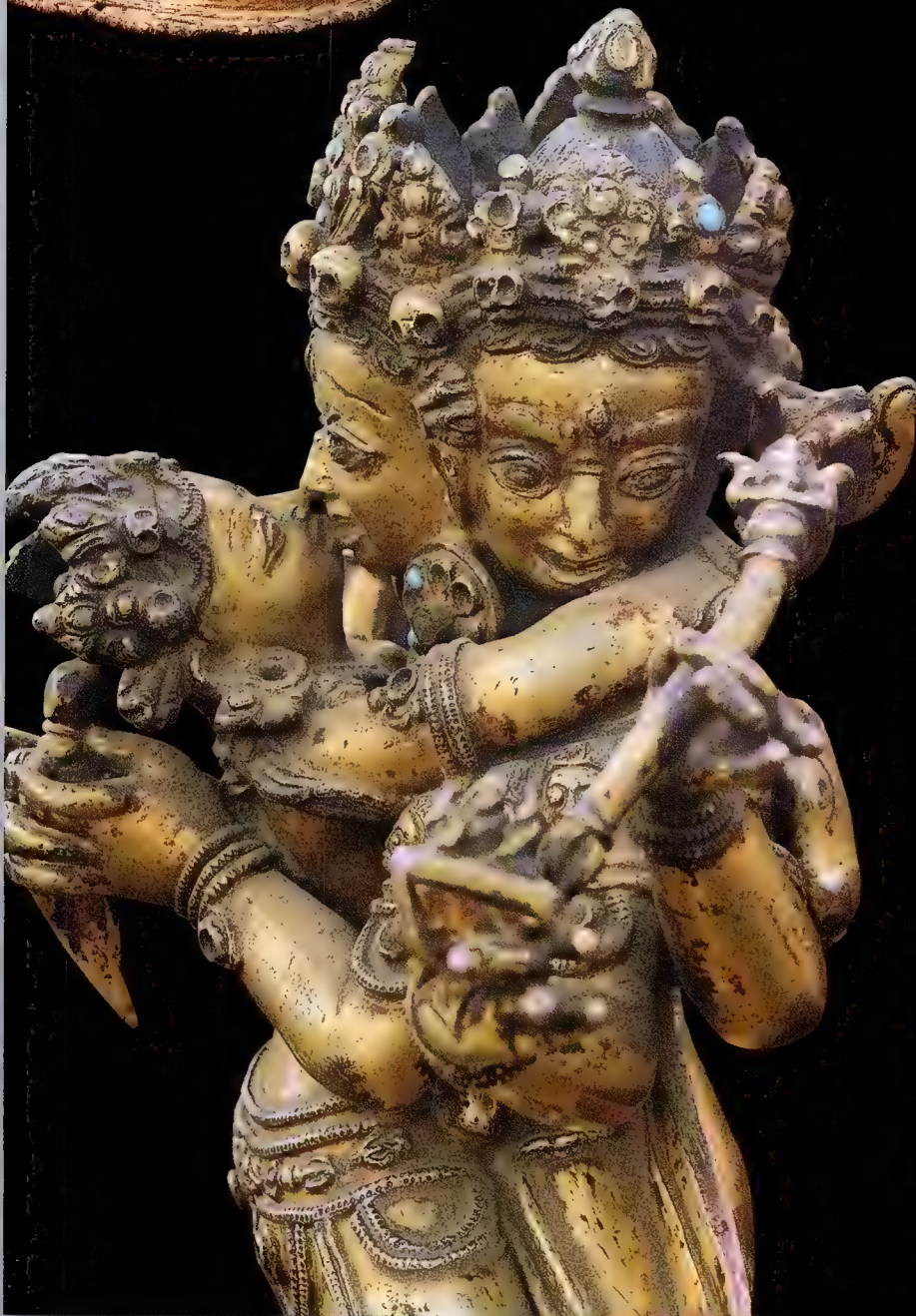
In contrast, there is the sculpture of the eleven-headed Guanyin. Here, the work is not as exquisite, and the style shows that it was done long after the completion of the temple. The eleven heads imply the following meanings: the front three faces show tranquility, the left three faces look fierce and the right three reflect anger. The upper face is tearful and the top front face is the face of Sakyamuni. It was believed that erecting an eleven-headed Guanyin diverted disaster, prevented disease and reduced the incidence of sin.

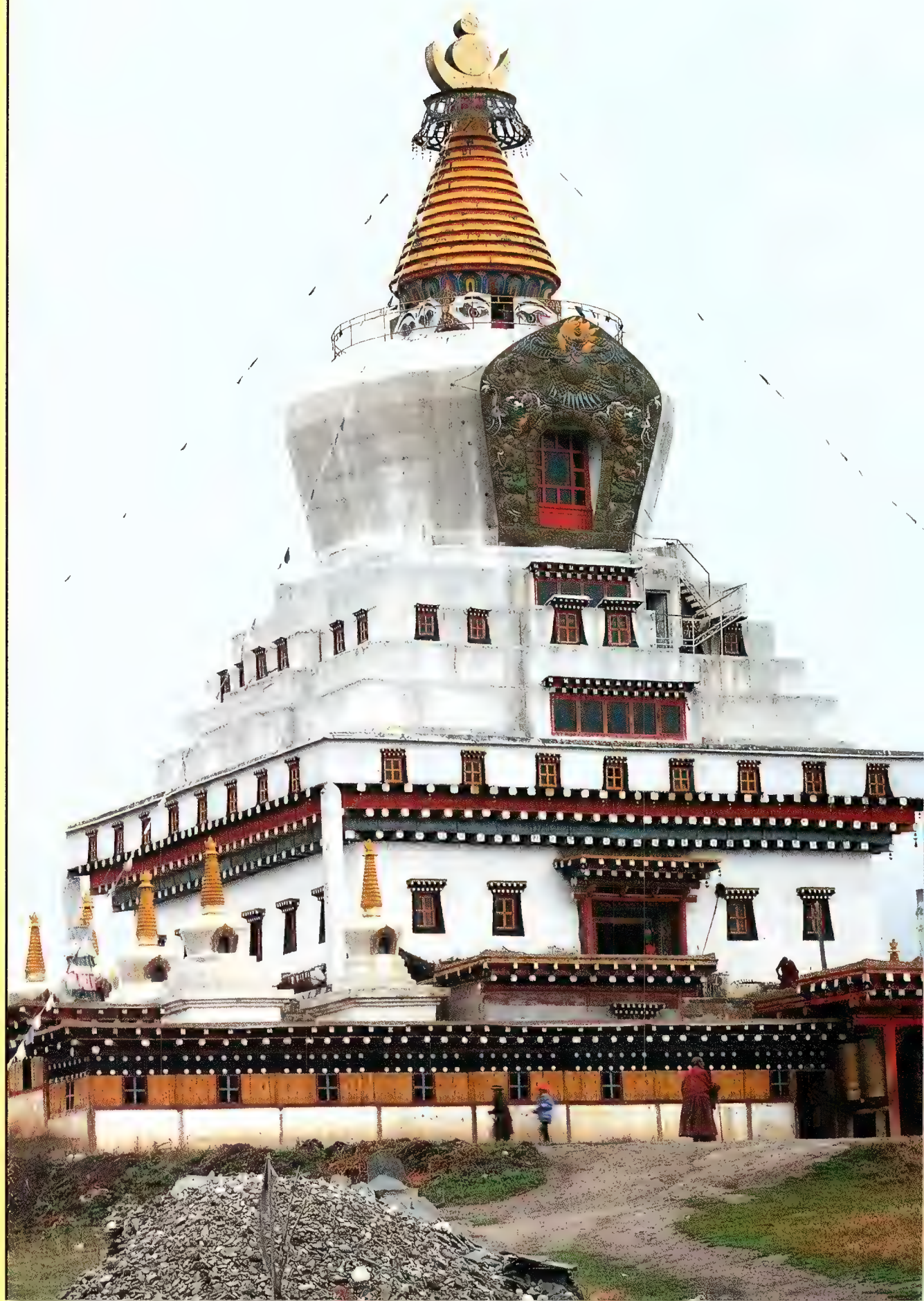


There is the legend that Guanyin wanted to disseminate Buddhism in the region inhabited by the Tibetans because the region was so backward. When she told the Buddha of her wish, he said: "It will be a very difficult task. Can you carry it through to the end?" Guanyin replied resolutely: "I would rather smash my body to pieces than stop half-way." When she arrived in the region she was disappointed not to be able to spread Buddhism, and she crushed her body into pieces and became hands and eyes and continued in this way. So, enshrined in the Yellow and Red sect lamaseries of Qinghai Province, in addition to the Guanyin with eleven heads, there are also sculptures that have a thousand hands or a thousand eyes.

The sculpture of the Supreme Yoga is the most unusual, although it is not clear which of the Buddhas this is supposed to represent. He has four faces and his arms embrace a woman. It is thought that the four faces are associated with the Hindu story of Brahma. When he went to Heaven, he was fascinated with the daughter of the King of Heaven and admired her charms from four directions, thus reviving his earthly desires. To punish him, the king

(Continued on page 93)





Buddhist Pagodas at Baima

PHOTOS BY GUAN SHUI TEXT BY BAI YU

Baima County lies between the two great river systems of the Yellow River and the Yangtze. Its southern neighbour is Sêtar County in Sichuan Province with its dense forests, while to the north are mountains and grasslands. The two main rivers flowing southwards through this area are the Markog and the Dokog. They eventually merge to become the larger Dadu River before continuing onwards. In the northern part of Baima County there are numerous streams which flow in the opposite direction to join the Yellow River. Such distinctly different topographical features along with interesting traditions and historical remains made a deep impression on us.

We had travelled in a southeasterly direction from Darlag to Baima County and arrived at the flatlands in the Bayanhar Mountains. It was there that we came across a collection of sixteen sacred towers, eight of which were built of brick and eight of stone. They had been constructed during the middle of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), and since there was no evidence of a brick kiln in the area, one can imagine what a Herculean effort it must have been to transport all those bricks and building materials through the mountains on the backs of yaks. At a glance, the structures built of stone seemed crude and simple, but they

were, in fact, constructed in an ingenious way so that there was no need to cover the walls with plaster, nor any need to use rivets or nails to join the different parts.

The group of eight stupas at the centre is comprised of Bodhi, Lianju, Jixiangruyi

(Auspiciousness), Dashenbian, Shenjiang, Xijing (Serenity and Purity), Shusheng and Nirvana. Their purpose is to extol the Sakyamuni's eight merits and achievements. The 80-metre-high Bodhi Dagoba, built in commemoration of Sakyamuni, is shaped like a wine bottle, which is a common design in this area. Our first impression was that the pedestal of the dagoba resembled a castle. It is a solemn building and is most beautiful to look at.

The pagoda, Xijing, is said to have been built by the followers of Sakyamuni who were locked in dispute. Sakyamuni tried to help them patch up their differences by teaching them the Buddhist scriptures and advising them to obey the law. They finally came to an agreement through his teachings, and, to honour him, they built this pagoda. The Xijing Pagoda is shaped like a human being with a head and a pair of eyes. The lower part looks like a body wrapped in a cape, the top like a hat. It is a simple, layered structure which fits well into the rugged surroundings.

The ornamentation on all the dagobas and pagodas is similar. The upper reaches of the universe are represented by the sun, moon and the stars. On some roofs, the highest storey is painted gold and shaped like the Buddha's headgear. This design sprang from the idea that the body of Sakyamuni turned to gold after his death. The thirteen yellow rings around the top represent the thirteen regions of Tibet, and the eyes painted underneath symbolize the Buddha's keen insight into all matters.



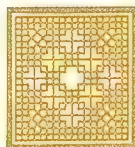
Translated by Anne Yan



Left to right: The Bodhi Dagoba with its castle-like pedestal; a group of small stupas; and the Xijing Pagoda which resembles a human being

The White Jade Temple at Jigzhi

PHOTOS BY GUAN SHUI
TEXT BY ZHENG YUNFENG



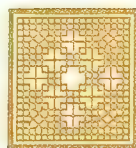
are designs made up of innumerable squares and circles painted in red, yellow, blue, green and white with splashes of black and grey, making it a lively, bold colour scheme. When the curtains are down, it looks more like a local residence than a temple.

Inside, it is quite spacious with a large hall for sutra chanting, a hall for giving talks on the scriptures, a meditation hall and a large kitchen. Within the temple grounds there are eight houses used as residences for the living Buddhas and more than 400 dwellings for lamas.



I left Baima and ventured northeast towards the town of Baiyüginba, 70 kilometres southwest of Jigzhi County. The town is named after the Baiyu (White Jade) Temple which stands by a stream in a distant valley. This lamasery does not have the grandeur of the temples in the Central Plains, nor the magnificence of the Potala Palace in Lhasa, but it is remarkable for its simple rustic beauty. It was built in 1857 by a living Buddha from the Great White Jade Temple in Sichuan Province, with which it is now affiliated. It continued to develop throughout the last century, and now it is well known in the Sichuan-Gansu-Qinghai border region as a temple of the Red Sect.

However, according to the local lamas in residence, there is nothing left of the original structure which helps to explain certain features of its architecture. On the outer walls



The hall for sutra chanting is very imposing with a crest of three copper pagodas. It has a second storey decorated with designs of golden deer and the Wheel of the Law (Falun). This symbolizes the power of the doctrines and their continued propagation. The ground floor also has Wheel of the Law decorations as well as the lotus flower pattern. Looking up, one can see clouds, waves and dancing dragons painted on the brackets between the columns and the crossbeams.

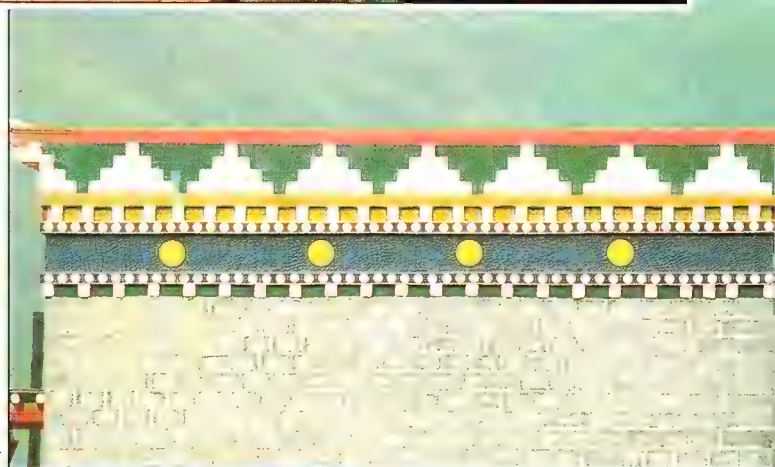
With the permission of the chief lama, I was able to attend a sutra-chanting ceremony. Lamas donned red and yellow gowns for the occasion and sat cross-legged in rows in the hall. They chanted the sutras while ringing bells as the incense smoke curled upwards through the drapes and canopies hanging from the ceiling.



Translated by Anne Yan



Left: This is the White Jade Temple as seen from the front. There are patterns of red, yellow, blue and green on the upper storey and below them more intricate geometric designs in white, yellow, black and green. On the ground floor, similar patterns can be seen on lintels over the doorway and around the outer windows. Apart from the religious symbols on the spine of the roof, one could mistake this temple for a local residence.

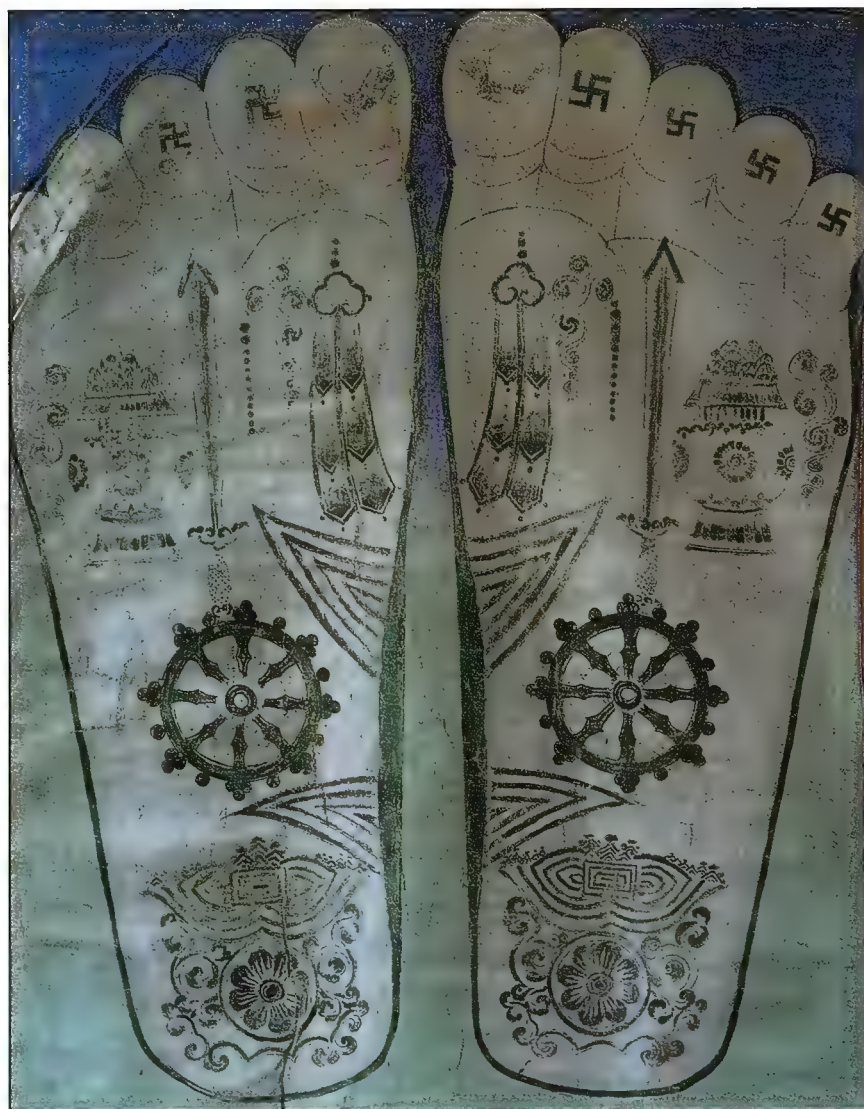


Top to bottom:
This red-faced animal is a symbol of good luck. It is found painted on the interior walls of the temple, although it is a motif rarely found in Buddhist temples in the Central Plains.
More geometric patterns in green, white, blue, red and yellow
The lamas don their red and yellow garments and sit cross-legged, waiting for the sutra-chanting to begin.

Traditional Tibetan Art at the Lower Wutun Lamasery

PHOTOS BY GUAN SHUI
ARTICLE BY BAI YU & SHI JI

North of Jigzhi in Qinghai Province are the A'nyêmaqên Mountains and further north again lies the county of Tongren, or Ragong, as it is known in Tibetan. This county is famous for a particular kind of Tibetan art, the media of which range from traditional folk painting, sculpture, wood-carving and embroidery to architecture. Each of these forms has a strong ethnic and religious emphasis and they are collectively known as Ragong art.



A late Qing Dynasty thangka of a pair of footprints of the founder of Black Sect (above), and a tightly-composed thangka of Sridevi or The Auspicious Goddess (right)

The Origins of Ragong Art

The origins of Ragong art can be traced back to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The troops from the Central Plains were stationed in this area as garrison troops and they brought their creative skills and techniques along with them. Indian Buddhism had already been introduced to Tibet and had made its way to Tongren. These factors combined and exerted their influence on local art. At the same time, the Ming court was advocating the propagation of Buddhism, and, as a re-

sult there was a huge demand for artisans to build new temples and lamaseries.

So, apart from reading the sutras, the monks at the lamaseries in Tongren learned many artistic skills to comply with the demands of the times. This custom still persists. The two Wutun Temples (Upper and Lower) are about six kilometres northeast of the town of Longwu in Tongren County, and here, seventy per cent of the men know how to paint. Local boys at the age of six or seven are sent off to the temple to learn both Buddhism and art. They begin their apprenticeships as unskilled workers helping their masters by completing such chores as preparing clay, preparing the canvasses for painting and grinding the pigments. After about three years they can help their masters trace some of the lines and they begin to apply colour. It is only after about eight to ten years that they complete the learning process and are able to begin work of their own to earn a living for themselves.

The Buddhist discipline at the Wutun Temples is more relaxed than elsewhere, which means that it is relatively easy for a lama to return to secular life. He pays a small sum of money and leaves the temple to take up life as an artist. Thus, the temple serves the dual purpose of teaching both the scriptures and technical and artistic skills.

The History of Ragong Art

The early period of Ragong art dates from the 15th century, and from then to the 17th century it displayed a strong influ-



ence from the Central Plains. Gold was seldom used, gods were portrayed as handsome heroes and the paintings were sparse with no unnecessary decorative features.

From the early 18th century onwards the Ragong artists began to leave their home towns to work in other places where Lamaism was the religion. They spread from Qinghai to Ningxia, Sichuan, Inner Mongolia, Gansu, and even India, Burma

This goddess (below), who is in charge of farming, also delivers water to the human world, and a painting (right) of early Ragong art in the Lower Wutun Lamasery



and Nepal, taking their skills with them and displaying the unified features of Tibetan, Han and Indian cultures. Ragong art became a symbol of religious belief. By the early 19th century, the middle period of Ragong art, the work had become more gorgeous and more meticulous. Brighter colours were used and clear expressions were portrayed on the faces. Gold colour was common on frescoes and *thangkas*,



traditional Tibetan scroll paintings, and golden lines were frequently used as a device to unify a composition. This was a wonderfully prosperous age for Ragong art, and the works produced during this period surpassed all others in use of colour and decorative techniques. It was a period demonstrating its inheritance from the past, yet at the same time ushering in a new stage.

The period from the early 19th century to modern times is regarded as the late stage of Ragong art and is seen as a retrogression. As changes took place in society, the Ragong artists started to apply their skills to making the interiors of the lamaseries as elegant and beautiful as possible. Visual and decorative effects became their preoccupation and artistic value was no longer a major consideration.

Ragong Art at Lower Wutun

The Wutun Temples are 1.5 kilometres apart, and it is to the lower lamasery we went to see architecture, *thangkas*, sculptures and paintings. The paintings, in particular, made a deep impression. For example, *Srideri* or *The Auspicious Goddess* is a middle-period *thangka* which displayed careful thought in both composition and use of colour. In the composition, density and sparseness of line were well balanced. At first glance, the painting seemed to be covered with a network of gold lines. In reality, wherever the deity was portrayed, it remained blank. This created the effect of moving the viewer's attention from the dense lines to the areas of sparseness, which were the areas in which lay the main theme of the painting. The background was painted dark green which accentuated the thin gold lines. The deity's face, by contrast, was painted using bright white and bright peach pink, giving the impression of spirit and liveliness.

A late Qing Dynasty *thangka* featuring

a pair of Black Sect footprints caught our attention, for this was not a usual portrayal of the Buddha. In fact, the footprints were said to have been left by Ston-par-gshen-rabs, the founder of the Black Sect. It was explained to us that the eight swastikas on the toes were their symbol and denote the eternity of the Universe. The two wheels under the arch of the feet represent sutras, and the two incense burners on the side indicate a life of happiness and plenty. The two arrows shooting from the back of the arches show the strength of the law and the fluttering streamers symbolise the spread of the religious doctrine. Although the *thangka* did not have great artistic merit, its presentation was truly unique.

The lamasery also had examples of modern *thangkas* and one was named *Cakrasamvara* or *The Happy Vajra*. The colours and layout were clearly modern and the painting was bold with bright colours. The composition was highly decorative and revealed great creativity on the part of the artist. The subject matter was an esoteric Buddhist deva called raja, portrayed embracing a red-complexioned devi symbolizing the union of the two sexes, in which state they entered the realm of nirvana. Esoteric Buddhism maintains that all Buddhas may appear in two opposing forms, for example, sometimes appearing as kindness itself and at others times in a wrathful manifestation. When under the instruction of Mahavairocana, if they appear in the male form they become rajas, and if they appear in the female form they become devis. Rajas are symbols of wisdom and devis symbols of compassion. When wisdom and compassion are united, all contradictions are resolved and harmony is achieved. This is the highest goal of esoteric Buddhism.

Another example of a modern *thangka* showed a stylized beast painted in bright

colours in a well-arranged composition. The beast was beautiful and had I not seen it in a lamasery, I might have taken it for the work of a painter belonging to a modern school of art. The modern *thangkas* at the temple displayed the unmistakable characteristics of modern Buddhism but



Two modern *thangkas* of a stylized beast (above) and *The Happy Vajra*

with much Western influence. They had a clear decorative function, yet they seemed much less impressive than the older, more traditional works.



Translated by Huang Youyi



The Art of the Sorcerer's Dance Mask at Ta'er Temple

PHOTOS BY ZHENG YUNFENG
ARTICLE BY XIANG DONG

湟中
Huangzhong •

青海
QINGHAI





Clockwise from below: Masks from the Dharma Protector Dance portraying characters of Semitic origin with their black beards, turbans and high-bridged noses; and in the Dharma Protector Dance, this magnificent costume and mask portray the dharma guardian who chops off the head of the demon.



Ta'er Temple, the biggest Tibetan Buddhist shrine in Qinghai Province, lies to the west of the capital, Xining, in Huangzhong County. Ever since 1612, during the Ming Dynasty, the temple has held four prayer festivals every year. The ceremonies rarely change, with the same religious rite forming the central theme on all four occasions.

This sorcerer's dance or *qamo*, as it is known in Tibetan, is indispensable in this rite. The *qamo* is in two parts, one called the Dharma Protector Dance, and the other, the Vajra Guardian Dance. Each dance lasts about two hours and its purpose is to exorcise evil spirits and demons, dispense with bad luck, invoke good weather for the crops, ask for retribution or seek transmigration for the soul. It is said that all the bad happenings throughout the year can be purged by the priests who perform the dance, and, as a result, the people are supposed to feel the benefits of peace and harmony in all their future undertakings.



The priests performing the dances wear costumes of gorgeous colours. They carry swords, vakra sticks, conches and other objects used in the Buddhist mass. However, the most striking part of the costumes are their masks. They are made in the temple workshops by the lamas and a great deal of craftsmanship goes into the making of each one. Each mask is individually made to portray the different characters in the dance.

They are made by placing a piece of hemp over the surface of a mould. The hemp is coated with sticky plaster of Paris. Layer after layer of cloth and plaster are applied, and at the same time, the shape of the mask is modelled to the desired form. It is left to dry in the sun and then stripped off the mould. Preparations are made to apply the pigments, which are all extracted from minerals.

Much imagination goes into the design of the masks. They represent deities, children and servants and can personify either good or evil. The exaggerated





Clockwise from below: A head representing a child disciple or young servant in the Dharma Protector Dance; a typical head representing one of the servants or disciples; a child disciple; and a young lama who is carrying several changes of masks as he prepares himself for the dance.



features and the expressions vary; some smile, some are grotesque, some are awe inspiring and some convey peace of mind. The Maitreya Buddha, for example, is portrayed as having a big, benign and benevolent face with huge ears and a beaming smile. One mask portrays somebody of Semitic origin, with deep sunken eyes, thick bushy eyebrows and a huge black beard. The topknot of hair is covered with a brightly patterned turban.

The masks are an integral part of the dancers' beautiful costumes. Drums and other percussion in-



struments beat out the rhythms to which the dancers perform, sometimes slowly and sometimes moving very fast. The soul of the man is supposed to communicate with the god who is no longer merely seen in dreams. He has come to earth to appear in front of the audience, who bow low or prostrate themselves in the process of communication with the god. The mask holds together both god and man and the appearance of the mask means the presence of the god.

Translated by He Fei

Ming and Qing Scroll Paintings at Xilai Temple

PHOTOS BY
ZHENG YUNFENG
TEXT BY BAI YU



With a bold pruning, the vast scene of Buddhist ritual to release souls from suffering is embodied in a few persons.

After Huangzhong County, we proceeded westwards to Ledu to visit the Xilai Temple. The name Xilai means "coming from the west" and the temple was first built in 1614 during the late Ming Dynasty. Forty years later, the temple was badly damaged by war, resulting in the destruction of all the Buddhist sculptures. It was not restored until the 1980's. However, in spite of the damage, twenty-four scroll paintings have miraculously survived from the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1368-1911) and are now preserved as the greatest treasures of the Xilai Temple.

Scroll paintings are called *thangka* in Tibetan, and, as the Tibetan form of Buddhism is observed in Qinghai Province, the art forms reflect the Tibetan influence. The *thangkas* are painted in deep gorgeous colours with much gold. However, what is interesting about the scroll paintings preserved at Xilai is that they are clearly painted within the Chinese tradition of court and literati painting. They inherit the clear fresh

transmigration and the coexistence of humans and gods.

Tang Dynasty painting style is at its best in the picture describing the Buddhist rituals to release the souls of those who died on land or water. The image of the Bodhisattva is plump, graceful and regal, and the other gods display an open and kindly disposition. The drawing of the figures is exquisite with beautifully contoured lines, with special attention paid to the texture of the clothing. The colours used are cinnabar red and azure blue, applied in layers and making a very strong contrast. The drawing is sparse, discarding the realism of vast scenes, using instead the symbolic simplicity of a waving flag under which four guards stand at either side of the altar, leaving to the imagination the hordes of pious worshippers offering sacrifices.

Another of the scroll paintings is particularly interesting for its portrayal of facial expression and intensity of atmosphere. The subject



This painting describes how all living beings are suffering tortures in Hell. Simple in style, it expresses profound truth.

brushwork handed down from the Tang and Song Dynasties (618-1279).

These paintings were made to commemorate the visit of twenty-four artists to the temple on the religious occasion marking the release of souls from their suffering into the next world. The subject is Buddhist, but the depiction is in the very definite literati style, clearly identified as Chinese court painting. The subject matter depicts various events in the Buddhist rites: monks chanting sutras, monks prostrating themselves before gods, ghosts and human beings. These paintings are divided into two groups: one group depicts deities such as Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Bodhidharmas and rajas, and the other shows the six methods of

matter is the suffering of those undergoing different forms of torment, and although there is not one single depiction of an actual act of torture, the prevailing mood is one of extreme mental and physical agony. The painter's skill is shown in the individual way he has treated the expressions of the sufferers and his ability to convey the dismal atmosphere.

The content of the twenty-four paintings differs and can be seen as separate units or as an integral part of the set. It was a precious discovery and a wonderful opportunity to see the subject matter using the skills of another tradition, truly a cross-cultural experience!

Translated by Chen Jiaji

The Painted Pottery at Liuwan

PHOTO BY ZHENG YUNFGENG
TEXT BY BAI YU



Earthenware from the primitive period on display in the exhibition hall at Liuwan Village, and (below) an interesting example of a painted pot in the form of a human



Travelling thirty-eight kilometres east of Xining we arrived at the village of Liuwan. It was here in 1974, while work was in progress on an agricultural project, that a group of tombs stretching in a belt along the northern bank of the Huangshui River was unearthed. The find was so great that it astonished many archaeologists. It numbered more than 500 prehistoric tombs and over 30,000 archaeological samples were recovered from a total area of 110,000 square metres. From east to west there are three distinct tomb areas representing three different cultures; the Majiayao culture, which can be divided into two parts, Banshan and Machang, and the Qijia and the Xindian cultures. Of these three, the Machang subtype of the Majiayao culture is considered to be the most important. Since 1982, the relics from the tombs can be seen in the Liuwan Museum. Among the exhibits, the painted pottery made an outstanding impression.

Banshan

Coloured pottery from the Banshan people accounted for more than two-thirds of the total find. It dates from about 2,500 B.C. (within 150 years). Patterns of whorls and geometric designs are painted on the original colour of the clay and are the most important. There are also some patterns of human and animal forms, which had not been seen before. Representative of the Banshan style is a large-bellied, flat-bottomed pot with a moderate sized mouth. It also has a unique decoration of sawtooth, circular and whorl patterns.

Machang

The Machang finds date from 2415 to 2040 B.C. The designs of the pots are imposing, with flat bases and round modelled legs. They are coloured with patterns of circles and frogs as the main designs. These evolved into more than 500 kinds of decorations, the majority of which are in geometric or animal form. There are more than ten kinds of geometric patterns. The animal patterns are of dogs, sheep, buffalo and birds. The meaning of these forms are thought by some to be the surname of the artisan or emblem of a clan, and there are those who consider that these signs bear a relationship to the early written language of the minorities in the western part of China.

I would choose a single-eared coloured pot as an example of something unique. It is decorated in large areas with the sawtooth design, symbolizing waves, and interspersed with a double swastika like sign. At first glance, this kind of abstract pattern can be taken for contemporary design.





Left to right:
A pot with an abstract
representation of an
osprey's head, coloured
pottery with a geometrical
design showing something
of modern artistic style,
and an urn with designs of
frogs which was used to
store grain

The threads of clay sticking
to the urn are a form of decoration



Another favourite of mine is a pot in a human shape, with a small mouth, a short neck and a round drum-like body. The most interesting aspect of this pot is the overall layout of the facial features: the eyes and eyebrows are crowded together, and the ears are placed on the cheeks, creating a simple, honest and endearing expression.

An urn for storing grains has a pattern of frogs executed in a way which makes it typical of the high Neolithic period. The frogs are distorted and seemingly painted at random with concise spare lines in a very terse style.


Qijia

By the time of the Qijia culture around 1915 B.C. (within 155 years), tremendous progress had been made in pottery making. For example, a

multi-holed pot decorated with an osprey's head is extremely expressive. To our eyes it is a caricature. Does it look like a hedgehog, an osprey or a field mouse? In any case, it is both decorative and artistic.

Xindian

The modelling and mixed linear decoration of the Xindian culture does not live up to the painted pottery of earlier periods. The pottery of the Xindian culture (c. 1,000 B.C.) is coarse, even using impressed rope designs. Painted decoration is very simple, usually consisting of thunder patterns or wide bands of twisting lines. Amongst the other decorations found are painted sun patterns or animal patterns such as dogs or deer. These pots belong to the late period of the Yangshao culture. Whether looking at the modelling or decoration, they do not live up to the colour and detail of the earlier periods.

Apart from these examples, there are many more beautiful and delightful pieces of pottery which can still impress four thousand years after manufacture. Today, when viewing modernist or abstract works, we cannot help but think of prehistoric times when our untrained ancestors already understood how to use their hearts and hands to create highly abstract and beautifully modelled articles for daily use. 

Translated by Gu Weizhou

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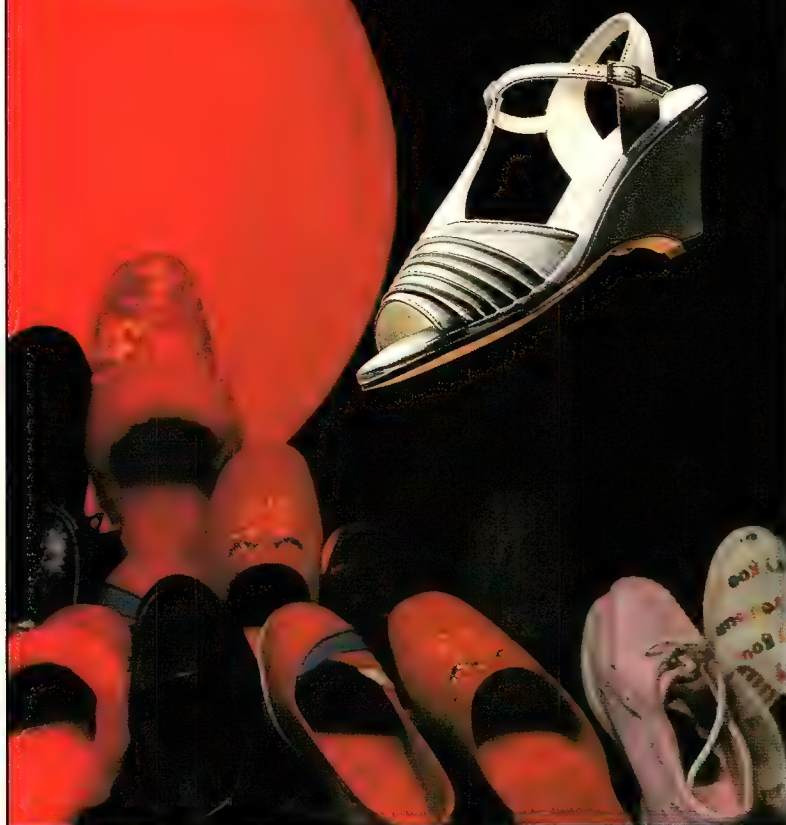
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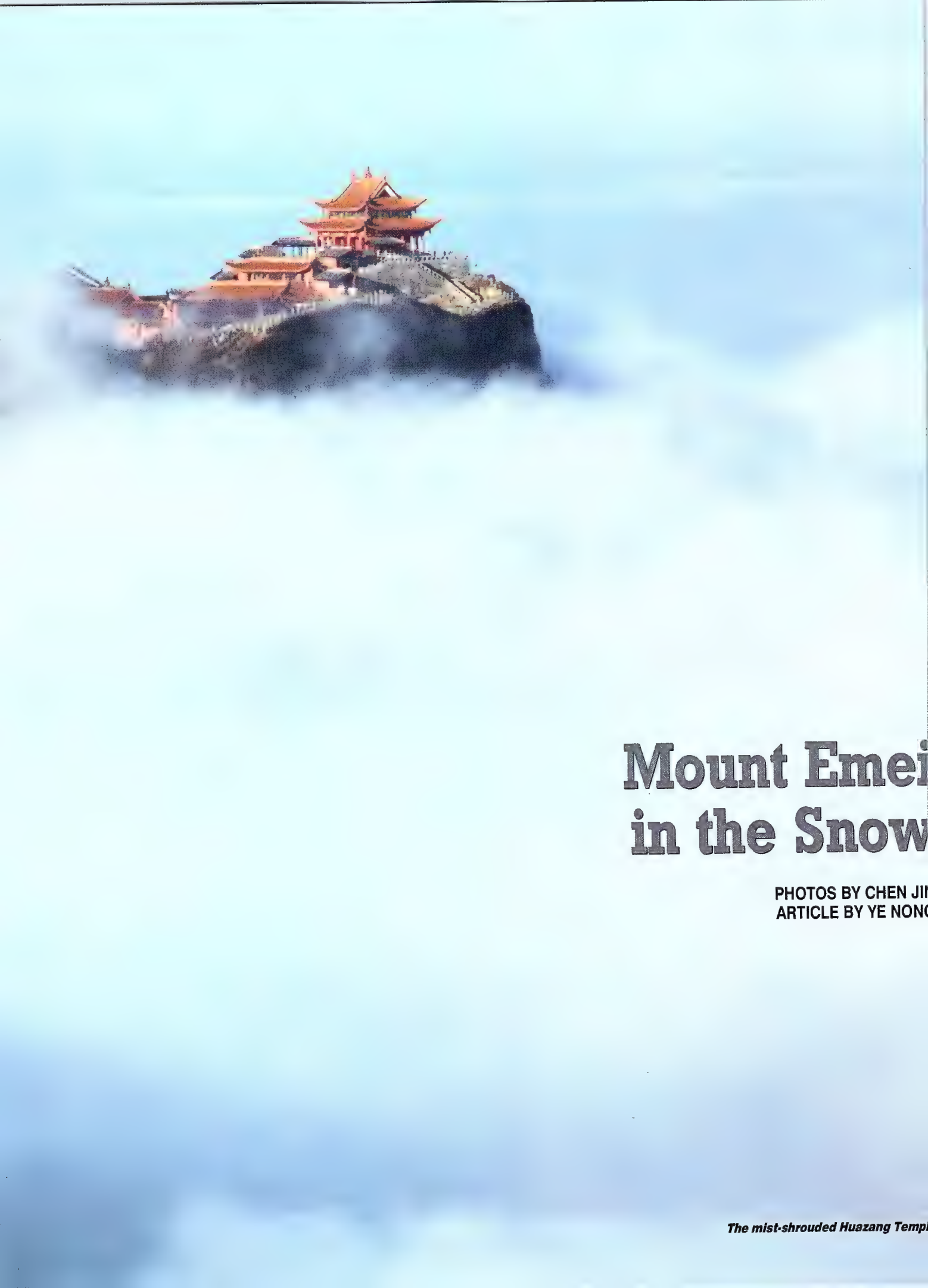
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Mount Emei in the Snow

PHOTOS BY CHEN JI
ARTICLE BY YE NONO

The mist-shrouded Huazang Temple

Mount Emei, its summit rising 3,100 metres above sea level, stands in an area slightly southwest of central Sichuan Province. For ages, the path up the mountain was rugged and difficult. It was not until 1988 that a cable was built connecting the approach and Jinding (Golden Peak), making it possible for the hurried visitor or those who lack physical strength to ascend to the summit.

One of China's four sacred Buddhist mountains (the other three are Mount Putuo in Zhejiang Province, Mount Jiuhua in Anhui and Mount Wutai in Shanxi), Mount Emei is dotted with temples and nunneries. Baoguo Temple, where we started our journey up the summit, was built in the 16th century. At the temple, the first thing that catches the eye is a gigantic bell sitting in the woods. It is 2.3 metres tall, two metres in diameter at the open end and weighs over twelve tons.

One kilometre up the hill from the Baoguo Temple is the Fuhu (Crouching Tiger) Temple encircled by red walls and tall and sturdy aged *nanmu* trees. There were not many visitors while I was there, and the temple monks were very friendly. They offered us a guided tour of the thirteen halls inside the temple. One monk particularly directed our attention to the temple eaves where there hangs a huge horizontal board inscribed with gold characters written by Emperor Kangxi (reign dates 1662-1722) of the Qing Dynasty boldly announcing "A Garden Away from Dust and Dirt". The emperor is said to have meant that the temple, as a holy ground, was swept clean by the clear mountain breeze, and he implied that it was above all the evils of society.

As we walked westward and passed Leiyin (Thunder Echo) Temple, Chunyang (Bright Sun) Hall, Huideng (Light of Wisdom) Temple, Shenshui (Divine Water) Pavilion and Zhongfeng (Central Peak) Temple, we heard water gurgling. We took about a hundred steps and came to a great valley which offers one of the ten best views of Mount Emei. The water referred to as "Clear Sound at Twin Bridges" is here. Water of different colours from two streams, the Heilong (Black Dragon) River and Bailong (White Dragon) River wash against a huge rock in the shape of an ox heart, creating a scene known as "Black and White Dragon Rivers Washing the Ox Heart". The rock is a kind of very hard basalt, and despite being washed by the rushing water for ages, it has stayed completely intact.

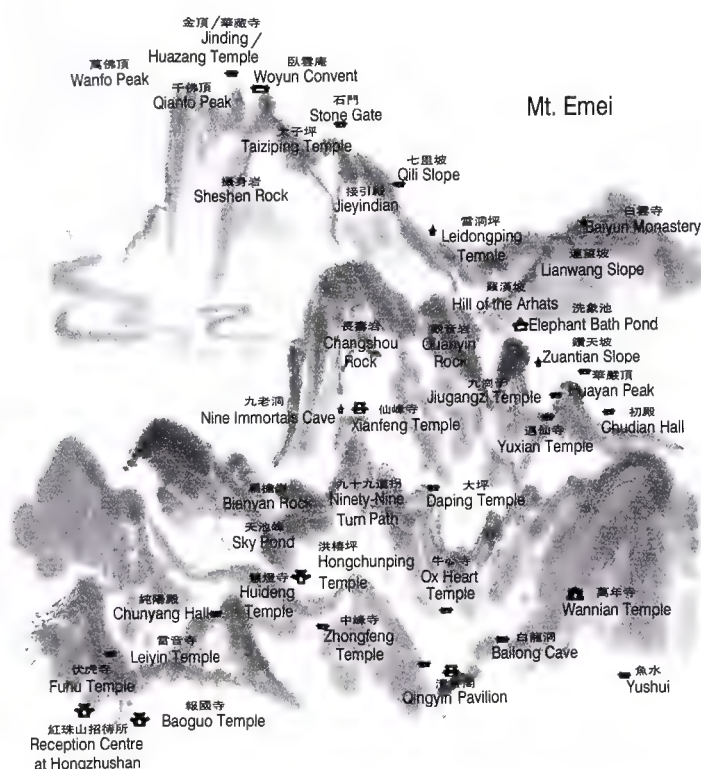
The path from the Qingyin (Clear Sound) Pavilion leads further into the valley. The damp winter wind drove across the stream, creating ripples upon ripples. Pebbles underneath the clear water presented a world of moving colours. This, together with the blossoming golden chrysanthemums on the slopes, gave me a sense of having entered a dream land.

Some one thousand metres upstream, I found a plank path along the Black Dragon River. The corrosive force of the stream had created a deep gully and the mountain path was no longer accessible. Consequently, a plank road had to be built on the sheer cliffs. The cliffs dominate the view, and the vines and plants on the cliffs further narrowed my field of vision, leaving only a thin shaft of light from above.

From here, we walked about 5,000 metres and, at dusk, we reached Hongchunping Temple. After checking into the only hotel we went to the monastery to see the Buddhist lotus lamp on which are carved three hundred arhats.

During the day in the mountain, we were disappointed at not seeing a single trace of winter, and it was a great surprise when the snow suddenly started falling at midnight.

When we woke up the next morning, the whole mountain was blanketed white with snow. We hurriedly put on our overcoats, rushed out and entertained ourselves with a snowball fight. Other visitors joined in and, for a while, snowballs flew on the mountain slope. Our hearty laughter echoed around the mountain temple.



As we were getting ready to continue the journey, we realized that we had neglected to bring with us three essential items for the climb: straw sandals, walking sticks and crampons. Fortunately, we were rescued by some tourists who offered us their gear as they would no longer need it on their way down.

All the paths ahead were buried in snow and the stone staircases were covered by a thick layer of ice. We trudged along with the help of the walking sticks and crampons, which left four deep dents on the icy road with each step we took. Still, we had to be extra cautious since we knew that one slip could cause a fall and leave us badly bruised.

The Hongchunping Temple and the Xianfeng (Immortal Peak) Temple were linked by a now upward, now downward, sometimes straight and sometimes twisting path. One section, called the Ninety-Nine Turn Path, twisted and turned as if it were a road built by a drunkard. Passage through the most difficult part required us to almost crawl along the ground.

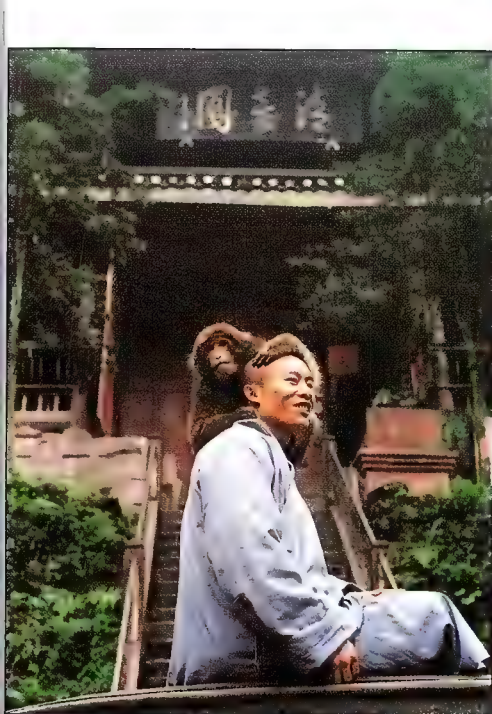
This is also where the monkeys roam. As we came through a turn along the path, we found ourselves face to face with a group of monkeys who blocked our way. Luckily, we came prepared. We all took out the candies we had brought and threw them out. The monkeys caught the candies, deftly peeled them and helped themselves to our gifts. We seized the opportunity and quickly pushed ahead. However, there were more monkeys than candies, and those smaller monkeys who had not had their share came running after us and refused to go away. We pulled the inside of our empty pockets out to let them see that there was nothing left. The young monkeys seemed to understand what we meant and finally let us go.

Later that day, we arrived at the Xixiang (Elephant Bath) Pond where we spent the night. The legs of our trousers were soaked with snow and we were shivering from cold. We quickly changed into dry clothes and went to the dining hall where we ordered "Duck with Snow Taro". It is said that the taro for this dish is buried under snow-covered land for a whole year before being dug out after the snow melts. Soon a big plateful of the dish was served. We enjoyed the hot food which soon warmed us up.

The weather was unusually cold that evening and we went to bed shortly after dinner. Soon we were awakened by fellow tourists who asked us to go and see the moon. Only then did I remember that Moonlight at Elephant Bath Pond was a scene very much worth seeing. The moon shed its bright cold light on the



Besides luggage carriers with their carrying-poles, there are also the "Hercules" who carry people up the mountain on their back rack.



Monkeys on Mount Emei find temple monks their best friends (by Yu Guangliu).

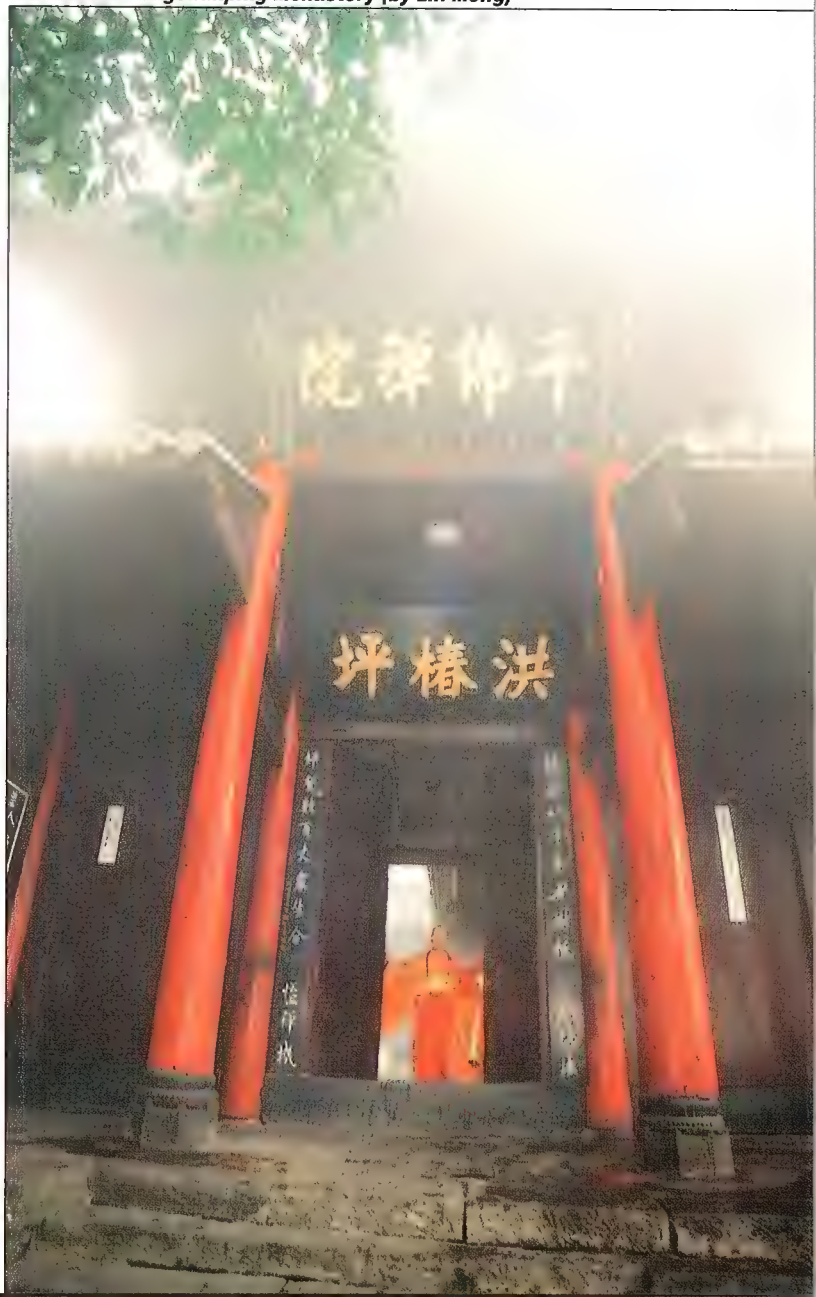


Walking sticks are indispensable for the climb up Mount Emei.

Sacrificial offerings are burned after worshipping Heaven (by Lin Meng).



The wide-open central gate of the ancient Hongchunping Monastery (by Lin Meng)





Early risers catching the golden glow of a Himalayan sunrise



This bundled-up woman manages a smile despite the frigid air and falling snow

A fantastic view of a sea of clouds as seen from the Golden Peak; enjoying the view is this Tibetan woman seen here holding aloft a portion of Tibetan Buddhist scripture.




snowy mountain, shrouding the sleeping peaks with a tinge of dreamy blue. Temples and monasteries hidden in the dark and quiet shadows of trees seemed all the more mysterious. Occasionally, phosphorescence was visible as if there were mountain spirits dancing in the moonlight.

We saw the sun for the first time on the third day of our trip. We walked uphill along the right side of Elephant Bath Pond and passed a forest of fir trees. Now laden with snow, the fir trees appeared like snow walls, while at the same time resembling robust snowmen standing in close formation. Walking through them gave us a sense of great strength.

We passed Leidongping Temple and came to the Reception Hall where people were standing in a long queue waiting for the cable car. We decided to move ahead on foot. At Qili (Seven Mile) Slope, we heard cheerful voices and found quite a few people playing in the snow. They put their raincoats on the thick snow, sat on them and slid down the steep slope. In no time, they were one hundred metres downhill at the foot of the slope where they were helped up by their friends. It was great fun and no particular skill was needed. I was so immersed in taking photos of them that I was suddenly knocked over by a girl sliding down. Before I could react, the girl had already disappeared, leaving behind her an echo of laughter.

After our stay at the ski run, we found that dusk had fallen when we eventually ascended the Golden Peak which is near the 3,077-metre-high Wanfo (Ten Thousand Buddha) Peak. The newly-completed Huazang Temple was cast in a golden evening glow. This temple, first built during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), has gone through tremendous changes. During a period of over 300 years it has been burned four times, the last time in 1973. Thousands of valuable cultural relics, along with the temple houses, were ruined by fire. Just a few years ago, tourists who visited the Golden Peak described the place as a wild mountain slope without temples. The present temple, completed early last year, occupies an area of 1,700 square metres. Capped with glazed tiles and supported by marble railings, it stands gracefully on the Golden Peak as if it were about to soar into the clouds.

Night fell and mountain dew rested on the ground. When we went to bed at Woyun (Sleeping Cloud) Convent, we could not help wondering whether we would be lucky enough to see the sun rise from Golden Peak the next morning before starting our journey down the mountain. 

Translated by Huang Youyi



The Buddhist halo with only the viewer's own shadow in it



In a gathering of Buddhist monks, "reporters" are none other than monks themselves.

A cloudy peak covered with snow, and (right) the 3,000-metre high Golden Peak looks down on the winding rivers of a plain in western Sichuan (both by Wu Jian)



Some Facts of Emei

Mount Emei (Emei means "delicate eyebrow"), rising majestically on the southwest edge of the Sichuan Basin, is seven kilometres southwest of the Emei County seat in Sichuan Province. The mountain was once described as narrow and beautiful just like a beautiful eyebrow, hence its name. The mountain range is divided into the Greater Emei, the Second Emei and the Third Emei. The Greater Emei is where tourists visit today. Its principal peak, Ten Thousand Buddha Peak, towering over other rolling peaks, is covered in lush green and dotted with huge rocks and sheer cliffs. The mountain is graceful and majestic. The winding stone path leading from the foot of the mountain stretches fifty kilometres as if it could go right into the sky.

The first temple on Mount Emei was built in the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220) and many more were added through the years. Originally a holy place for Taoism, the temple witnessed Buddhism flourish during the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) Dynasties. Buddhism here reached its peak in the Ming and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties when about one hundred monasteries of various sizes competed with each other. Mount Emei then was one of China's major places for preaching Buddhism.

Buddhist activities at Mount Emei began to lose their momentum in the late Qing Dynasty. This development, together with the rainy and damp weather, brought decay to the temples. By the early 20th century, more than half the temples had collapsed. Since the 1950s, large-scale repairs have been undertaken on two occasions, with key temples and gardens getting a new look. Today, there are over a dozen major temples and scenic sites including Baoguo Temple, Wannian (Ten Thousand Year) Temple, Fuhu (Crouching Tiger) Temple, Qingyin (Clear Sound) Pavilion, Black Dragon River, Plank Road, Hongchunping Monastery, Cave of the Nine Immortals, Elephant Bath Pond and Golden Peak. Climate varies a great deal as mountain ranges rise and fall. In general, the low hilly area belongs to the subtropical zone, the middle level of the mountains belong to the temperate zone and the top level belongs to the frigid zone. The temperature difference between the foot and summit of the mountain is about 15°C. The average temperature at the Golden Peak is around 11°C in July and August. Over 3,000 floral species grow in vertical distribution on the mountain, and Mount Emei is rich in animal resources as well. 





The Hometown of a Great Playwright

PHOTOS BY
PENG ZHENG

ARTICLE BY
ZI SHUANG



Guan Hanqing, who lived during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), wrote many operas, some of which are still performed. He lived in Wuren Village, Anguo County in Hebei Province, an area as well-known for its traditional Chinese medicines as for its famous writer. I visited the village and surrounding neighbourhoods to find out more about this remarkable man.

I went first to the city's herbal medicine market where, next to the Temple of the Master of Medicine, stands a memorial hall dedicated to Guan Hanqing who was not only a writer but a skilled physician as well.

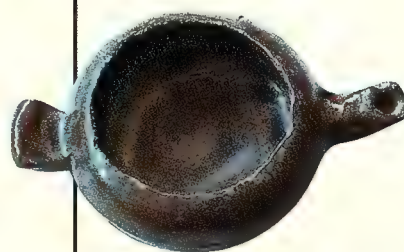
Guan Hanqing was the most prominent of all the Yuan playwrights. He was born during the

early 13th century and died in 1279, shortly after the fall of the Song Dynasty. He was a musical talent and an expert in theatrical production. He also had a great love for poetry and was interested in painting. Guan was a carefree soul who answered more to his heart than his mind. In the *Annal of Famous Government Officials* published during the late Yuan Dynasty, he was described as "a superb writer who is handsome, learned, unbound by worldly pursuits, and the most outstanding among those who share the same qualities".

This gifted man composed more than sixty plays during his lifetime. Unfortunately, most of the plays have been lost and only a few exist

today. The *Orphan of the Zhao Family* and *The Grievance of Dou E* (see box) were among the first Chinese operas translated into other languages for the appreciation of Western audiences. Besides being a well-known writer, he was also a capable theatrical company manager and a dedicated actor.

The majority of his plays explored the corrupt side of the society of his time. They depicted the sufferings and persistence of the common people, especially young women, in fighting evil, and he created some of the most outstanding heroines in the history of Chinese opera. Some of his plays centred around the heroic acts of historical characters while others recreated cases of public trials. His plays are marked by vivid characterization, carefully thought-out plots and intriguing scenes. They are complemented with songs that have appealing melodies and the most apt lyrics. His plays significantly influenced subsequent Chinese operas and the development of *zaju* (poetic drama set to music) during the Yuan Dynasty.



Wuren Village, the home town of Guan Hanqing, stands next to the ancient town of Wurenqiao, about fifteen kilometres from the southern side of Anguo County. There are about 440 families living in the village. The "Guan Mansion", where Guan Hanqing used to live, is on the northwestern side of the village beside the Pushui River. It was where Guan Hanqing spent the final years of his life after he discovered that he was seriously ill. However, despite his illness, he did not stop writing but would work every day from dawn till nightfall. When he was not sitting down writing at his desk, he would walk back and forth in his room, deliberating the content and structure of his plays. As time went by, a deep rut was formed in the middle of the wooden floor of his room as a result of his constant pacing.

Opposite page: A portrait of the playwright Guan Hanqing

This page: Actors and actresses waiting backstage and performing on a temporarily built stage; an ink stone carved with two lions and a tiger's head and a ceramic pot for holding water, both believed to have belonged to Guan Hanqing





An actress with her child backstage. After rocking her baby to sleep, she will change into her costume and get ready for her performance.



This child actor may one day become a well-known opera star.

Unfortunately, his house was later damaged in a flood. The building now standing on the same site was rebuilt later by villagers who decided to retain the name "Guan Mansion" for the new building to commemorate the playwright.

According to the villagers, there are no descendants of the Guan family living in the village. Nevertheless, going to the opera is still one of their favourite pastimes. Theatrical companies are hired to come to the village to perform at weddings and even at funerals. In fact, whenever there is a funeral in the village, a theatrical company is brought in. Not being able to pay for a theatrical group would mean great loss of face and would reflect badly on their financial well being. At present, there are about six non-government theatrical companies specializing in Hebei bangzi (clappers) opera, Beijing opera, and silk string music in Anguo County. Besides bringing in theatrical groups, the villagers, no doubt influenced by the great writer's reputation, sometimes form their own companies so as to feel the excitement and satisfaction of performing their favourite plays on stage. Strolling down the streets in the village, you cannot help feeling that

everybody there loves opera and could probably sing a song or two should they feel like it.

The playwright's influence was certainly not limited to the village in which he once lived. His powerful plays also captured the hearts of people living in nearby villages such as the Xicuizhang Village opposite to Wuren.

When I arrived at Xicuizhang Village, I saw that a temporary stage built with wooden planks and a tent had been erected in a courtyard between two brand-new buildings. One of the buildings was being used as the backstage area. There was no curtain between the front and backstage, and actors and actresses were on stage as soon as they stepped out of the entrance of the building. The audience, packed in the shade of the trees in front of the stage, were totally absorbed in the plot of the opera.

As the sun moved across the sky, the shade also moved, and the audience, although engrossed in watching their favourite opera, also moved so as to stay out of the heat of the sun. I also noticed that some women spectators would watch for a while, leave and then return. They kept this up, piquing my curiosity. I found out later that they left to go home to check the fire in their stove to make sure that whatever they were cooking would not be burnt.

When the opera was over, I found that there was still time for me to visit the tomb of Guan Hanqing before nightfall, so I hired a car and



headed east from the village. The road that led me to my destination stretched out between endless fields in which medicinal herbs are grown. Patches of their white, yellow and blue flowers could occasionally be seen along the way, separated by sparkling green vegetables ready to be harvested. The tomb of the playwright is less than one kilometre away, and I was there before I had time to admire the beautiful scenery outside the car windows. The tomb of Guan Hanqing stands on an elevated platform in the middle of a field of growing herbs.

Although the great playwright passed away a long time ago and was buried alone in his grave, he should not feel lonely. He was loved by people of his own generation and by the many generations who came after. His tomb is covered with flowers of the medicinal herbs which he knew so well when he was alive.

Translated by Ursula Yeung

This actress (above) and her company cycled all the way from the city to perform in the village. Parked next to the stage were the bicycles they came on. She takes advantage of the intermission to clean her bicycle and will be ready to hop back on stage when her turn came again.

The tomb of Guan Hanqing (right)

Dou E, the heroine of the play *The Grievance of Dou E*, is a young woman condemned by fate. She was sold to a family as a child bride, and her husband died at the age of seventeen. After her husband's death, she and her mother-in-law lived together and looked out for each other. Unfortunately, her youthful beauty caught the eye of a hooligan who, upon being rejected by Dou E, decided to take revenge by framing her for murder. Dou E was sentenced to death. Before the execution, Dou E, in great despair and anger, swore in the name of heaven that, as proof of her innocence, firstly, her blood would be splashed high on to a long piece of white cloth hanging in the execution ground; secondly, snow would fall in the month of June and, finally, famine would occur for three consecutive years. Her three curses all came true after her death, and her name was finally cleared. Guan Hanxing vividly depicted the face of the corrupt society during Yuan times and successfully portrayed the image of a woman who refused to yield in the face of persecution. The story of Dou E has become one of the classics of Chinese opera.



A Pilgrimage to Hangzhou

PHOTOS BY REN JING TEXT BY TAMMY LEUNG



Like a gentle army, groups of blue-clad women descend on Zhejiang's Hangzhou each year in the early spring. They are religious pilgrims, Buddhist worshippers from the southern part of Jiangsu Province or from the Jiande region in western Zhejiang who make a tour of temples in the Hangzhou area each year.

Each pilgrim wears a blue suit, indigo cloth shoes, a head scarf and a yellow shoulder bag. These are mostly country women, older rather than young come to the temples of Hangzhou to pay homage to Buddha.

Their act of homage is called Pilgrimage to the Mountain, and the tranquil mountain paths they walk echo only with their footfall. From the distance, you can see the red banner of one of the groups of pilgrims, flown so that those lagging behind will not be long separated from their group.

Many of these pilgrims will find their way to three Buddhist temples, Fajing (Mighty Mirror), Fajing (Mighty Cleanliness) and Faxi (Mighty Happiness). Although not yet fully rebuilt since the 1970's, these temples still attract many religious visitors. Another popular temple on the pilgrimage is Lingyin Temple. It is larger and more famous than the other three, but many visitors find it too crowded and too expensive to enter.

Making the rounds of temples in Hangzhou goes back to an old belief that only those who have touched "all the statues and all the pillars" could prove their piety and receive the blessings of the Bodhisattvas. It is interesting to note, however, that these pilgrimages are not necessarily only to Buddhist temples. In fact, I even saw worshippers in a temple dedicated to Yue Fei, a famous general of the Song Dynasty (960-1279). These worshippers do not believe in only one religion nor do they worship only one idol but will piously



The pilgrims take a long distance bus (left) to make the pilgrimage to the temples of Hangzhou. On the wall of a temple is written "The Western Paradise is within a short distance" (right). These words represent the worshippers' beliefs that good deeds produce good results, and that pious devotion to Buddha helps them towards the Western Paradise after their death.



These religious pilgrims dress alike in blue cotton suits, indigo shoes and yellow bags with red flowers in their hair.



prostrate themselves before any icon they believe will protect them. In all fairness, although Yue Fei is not a Buddha, he is believed to be able to assure a bumper harvest, peace and happiness.

There is more on the agenda than just visiting temples. A trip to the city, especially for rural people, means a chance to shop for goods not available at home and, of course, for souvenirs for friends and family members who did not make the trip.

These worshippers believe that the Western Paradise is not far away, as indicated by the four Chinese characters written on a

temple wall. They read: "The Western Paradise is within a short distance." This sentiment matches the wish they cherish in their hearts.

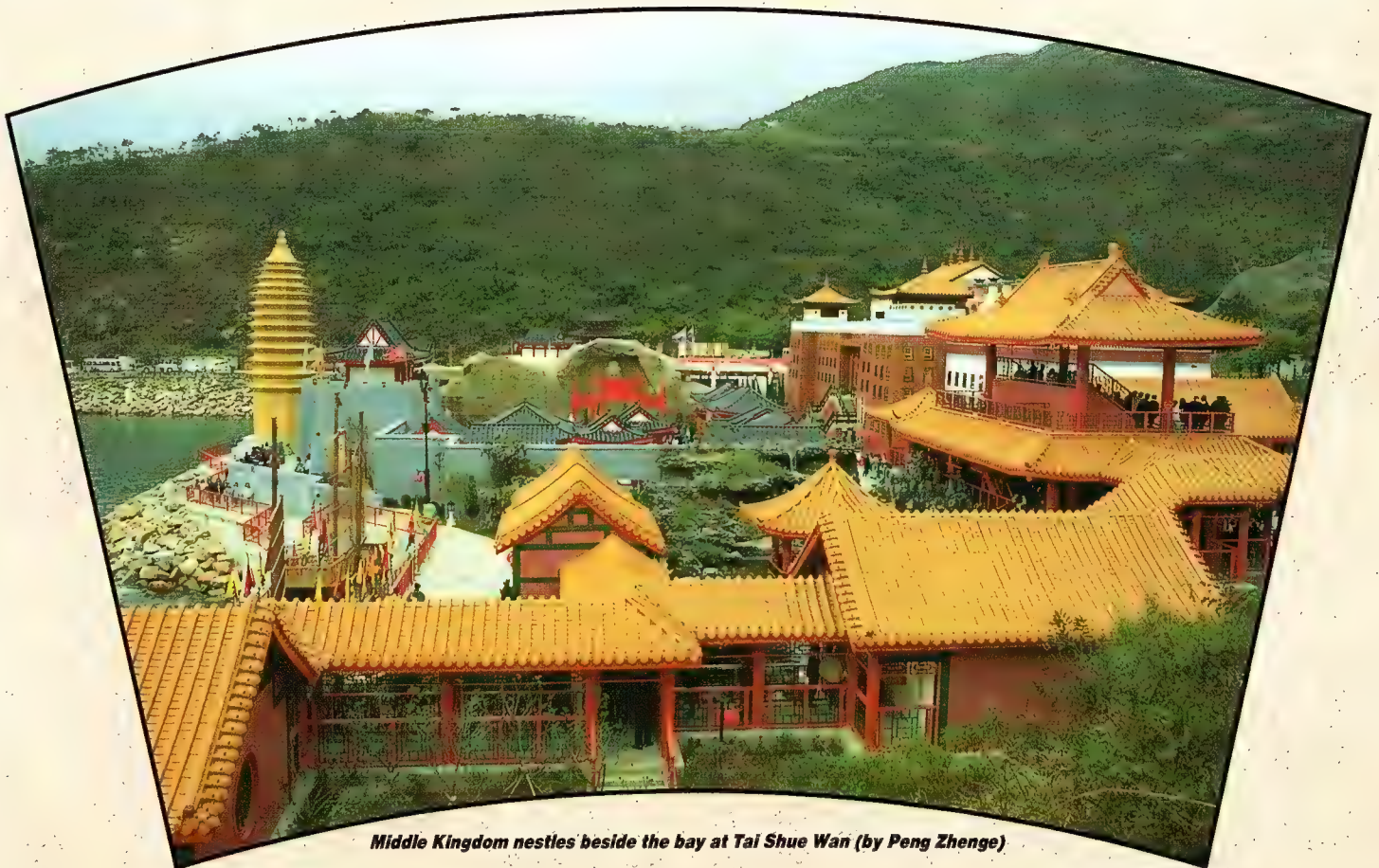
The Qingming Festival signals the end of winter and the beginning of spring. It is a time for family picnics and also a time to pay homage to dead ancestors. Qingming also signals the end of the yearly pilgrimage to the temples of Hangzhou and the time when the religious pilgrims must return home.

Translated by Gu Weizhou



Thirteen Dynasties and Five Thousand Years....

PHOTOS & ARTICLE BY LAM KIN FAI



Middle Kingdom nestles beside the bay at Tai Shue Wan (by Peng Zheng)

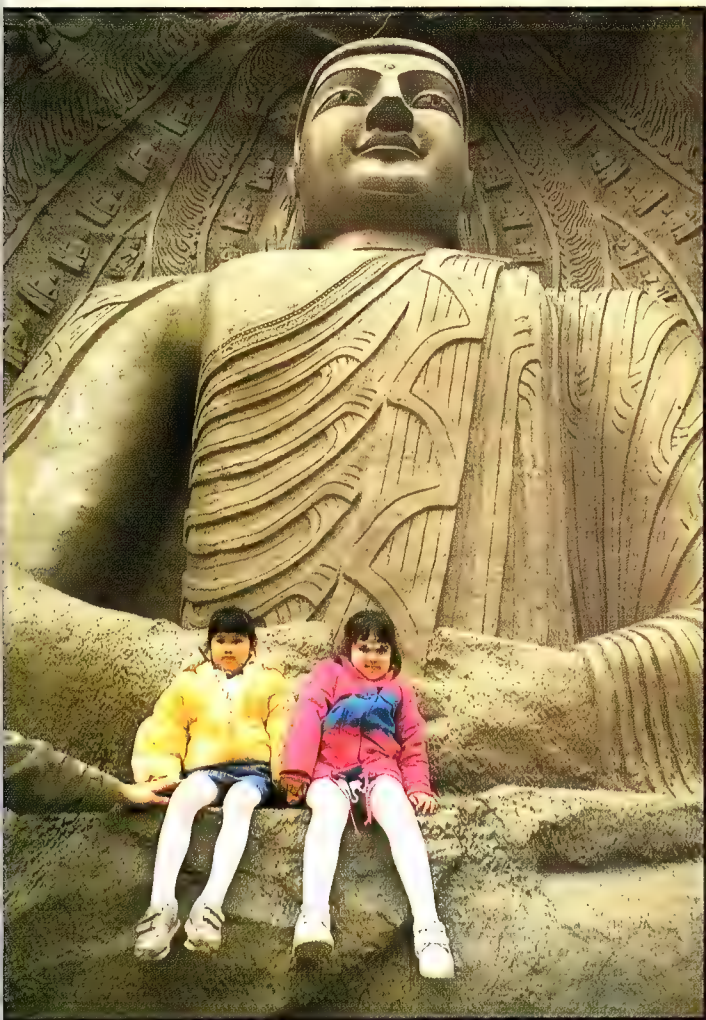




Representing the achievements of the Han dynasty, artisans weave silk (1) and throw pots (2, by Chan Yat Nin). Though reduced in scale, the Buddha modelled on the Yungang Grottoes at Datong in Shanxi is highly impressive (3).



2



3

There's the Song Dynasty Village, there's Ocean Park and Water World... And now there's the Middle Kingdom! Opened in January 1990, this latest in a series of Hong Kong theme parks is located at Tai Shue Wan, adjacent to its 'sister', Ocean Park, not far from Aberdeen on the southern side of Hong Kong Island. Here, a relatively small crescent of reclaimed land has been laid out as a microcosm of China and its history, the purpose being both educational and entertaining. Billed as 'a walk through thirteen dynasties and 5,000 years of Chinese history', it is a fascinating place.

There are a number of ways of getting there, the easiest probably being by Ocean Park's own double-decker bus (operated by Citybus) from Admiralty; the thirty-minute journey is inexpensive. Middle Kingdom is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and you should probably allow half a day for the visit.

As you arrive at the complex, the first thing that meets your eyes (apart from the lovely scenery) is the ceremonial wooden archway with three tiers of eaves. On either side behind stand statues of auspicious animals in a replica of a 'spirit path' such as used to flank important tombs. Another gateway leads you into Middle Kingdom, where a guide dressed in traditional costume is waiting to escort you around the recommended circuit. There is no need to have a guide, by the way, as comprehensive literature is available and the entrance ticket comes with a booklet of vouchers – of which more later.

You start with a stroll through a covered walkway introducing some of the highlights of each period and leading to a thatched hall containing replicas harking back to deepest antiquity and semi-mythical rulers. This is the period of the Xia, Shang, Zhou and Qin dynasties (c. 21st century–207 B.C.). A huge bas-relief sets the tone; mounted warriors engage in combat as Huangdi (the Yellow Emperor) watches from his canopied war chariot in the titanic fight against another tribal leader, Chiyou. Exhibits include inscriptions on tortoise shells and oxbones, bronzeware from the Shang dynasty (16th–11th century B.C.), 'books' consisting of linked bamboo strips, and early calligraphy.

A white 'jade' statue of Shihuangdi, the 'First Emperor' of the Qin, stands proud in the centre of a second chamber, with replicas of his famous funerary escort of terracotta warriors and horses on one side and a series of wax tableaux on the other. These latter depict such moments in history as Confucius giving a lecture, the poet Qu Yuan committing suicide for the good of the nation (and thereby giving rise to the Dragon Boat Festival, entirely appropriate for dragon-boat-crazy Hong Kong!), and King Zhou, the decadent last Shang ruler, disporting himself with his favourite concubine.

As you step out of this building, notice the bronze lamps by the side of the steps. They are decorated with a sheep motif based on relics found in the tomb of Prince Jing of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) in Mancheng County, Hebei. These signal our passage into that dynasty, which is represented at Middle Kingdom by a pleasant courtyard surrounded by open workshops. The fascinating thing is that the shops are staffed by real, living, breathing men and women – dressed in appropriate garb – who proceed to demonstrate the arts, crafts and trades of those times. In many cases, you can try your hand, too – for example, at the potter's wheel. Other trades and crafts represented include paper-making, glass-making, a forge, silk-weaving on a tall loom, a lacquerware studio, and a carriage workshop. One of the most popular stops is at the wine distillery. The wine is rice wine and your ticket entitles you to a bowlful of the surprisingly heady brew. These stalls are a real hit with visiting children, and it is clear that the educational aspect of this complex is far from dry and boring. I was told that the potter's wares are used in the teahouse, the paper is used at the calligraphy stall (featured under a later dynasty), the fabric is used for staff clothing, while much of the other stalls' output is sold through the souvenir shop.

Continuing in the prescribed direction, we walk over an inlaid brass plaque which tells us we have crossed another 'date line'. A tall yellow pagoda modelled on one at Chongyue Monastery in Henan Province signals the importance of the Buddhist religion for the dynasties ahead. And, indeed, the next moment you turn into a corridor flanked by ten-metre-high 'rock' walls studded with models of some of China's most amazing cave-temple artworks. We are now in the turbulent period of the Wei, Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties (220–589), when Buddhism flourished.

Straight ahead at the end of the corridor waits the Xuanmiao Temple. Visitors can use bamboo sticks to divine their fortune here; a Taoist 'priest' will interpret the meaning of the stick you throw.

The complex opens out again into a wide square representing the bustling marketplace of a town during the prosperous Sui and Tang dynasties

Middle Kingdom



(581–907). The costumes worn by staff in this section are brocade and the shops sell stationery, books of rubbings, pottery figurines, etc. There are frequent demonstrations and here again you are encouraged to try your hand – at manipulating brush and ink to produce your very own piece of calligraphy, for example. This is where the vouchers enclosed with your entrance ticket come in handy. A voucher will also afford you a refreshing bowl of Oolong tea at the airy teahouse perched in the centre of the square. And, since ordinary money is not accepted within the complex (except at the restaurant), the money-changer with her abacus is the person to visit to exchange your worthless cash for 'Middle Kingdom currency' should you wish to make any purchases.

Other highly entertaining features in this section include the maker of dough figures in one corner – another children's favourite – and the skilled young musician who plays a variety of instruments, including the *pipa* or lute and the *guzhen*, a zither-like instrument. There's also a lady who fashions grasshoppers, snakes and tiny jumping frogs out of plaited straw!

We leave this period of history via a fortified city gateway symbolizing the



warring era of the Song, Liao, Jin and Yuan dynasties (960–1368). A couple of exhibition rooms within the massive walls contain displays of armour and weapons. The Chinese invented gunpowder and rockets, and the first firearms were complex and often very decorative contraptions. There is also a room devoted to the compass, another major Chinese invention, with replicas of devices such as a lodestone fashioned in the shape of a ladle and various south-facing implements. These cool, dimly lit rooms contrast strongly with the atmosphere of the Sui-Tang marketplace.

Mounting the gateway, we reach a room containing a wax tableau of the Venetian Marco Polo being received by Kublai Khan, founder of the Yuan dynasty. There are fresh breezes and sea views to be enjoyed as we continue along the promenade past models of early cannon to an exhibit which epitomizes the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), the great seafaring age of Chinese history: a model of one of the ships of the eunuch navigator Zheng He (1371–1435). Zheng He is famous for his seven voyages across the Indian Ocean to the coast of East Africa, leading an enormous fleet of some two hundred ships. You can go on board the vessel and study charts detailing his voyages.

Turning back from the sea, we face a series of rooms and corridors with yellow-tiled roofs, intricately carved and painted beams, and red pillars, set in a serene garden around a pond. These are modelled on the Summer Palace in Beijing and bring us up to China's last feudal dynasty, the Qing (1644–1911).





Marco Polo makes his first appearance at the Yuan court (1), while a model of Zheng He's ship evokes Ming feats (2). The Qing dynasty is all imperial concubines (3) and imposing architecture — here the stage (4, by Chan Yat Nin).

4



Work out your animal sign (1) and enjoy performances of juggling (3, by Chan Yat Nin) and the traditional lion dance (4, by Peng Zhengze). Modern necessities intrude only where absolutely necessary (2).



2



3

Here we can visit the emperor's study, complete with all the accoutrements of the scholar, his dining room, and his bedchamber, where a beautiful, gently smiling concubine sits in one corner, fanning herself in the heat. Maids of honour also grace this corner of the complex, ready — as are all the staff — to answer visitors' queries.

More covered galleries lead us to the entertainment heart of the Middle Kingdom complex — a theatre based on the Empress Dowager Cixi's theatre in Beijing. Part of the attraction comes from this being an open-air performance with the hills up behind and birdsong all around but, in the summer, one should remember to choose a seat in the shade, since each performance lasts for around forty-five minutes. The Middle Kingdom management has secured the services of the Guangzhou Cultural Bureau to provide acts for the three daily performances, and the acts are changed every month. The professional artistes present traditional dances, including the popular lion dance, demonstrations of *kung fu* and *qigong* skills, conjuring tricks (with audience participation!), as well as the most astonishing displays from acrobats, jugglers and contortionists. The atmosphere in this 500-seater theatre is inti-



4

mate, and the performers are much closer than they would be in an 'ordinary' theatre.

After the show, wander back through the complex and note architectural details you missed before, catch one of the occasional martial arts displays in the Sui-Tang marketplace, ring one of the many small bells for good luck, go and sniff the sea air.... Or, maybe, head for the tall building modelled on the Potala Palace in Lhasa. The ground floor is laid out as an exhibition hall devoted to the many special Chinese social customs, religious practices, etc., which are difficult to fit into the historical time frame of the other sections. Here, for example, you will find information on Chinese astrology, traditional Chinese medicine, *fung shui*, the art of geomancy, as well as Chinese opera. There is also a souvenir shop. If you continue up the stairs to the first floor, you may make a rather longer stay than planned, as this is the Middle Kingdom Restaurant, offering an extensive menu of Chinese cuisine in comfortable and elegant surroundings.

Did I mention that this is the only air-conditioned building in the whole complex? Visitors unused to Hong Kong's steamy summer heat should note this and take along an umbrella/parasol or hat and a fan. The umbrella would also come in handy in case of rain!

C

Translated by W. Lau

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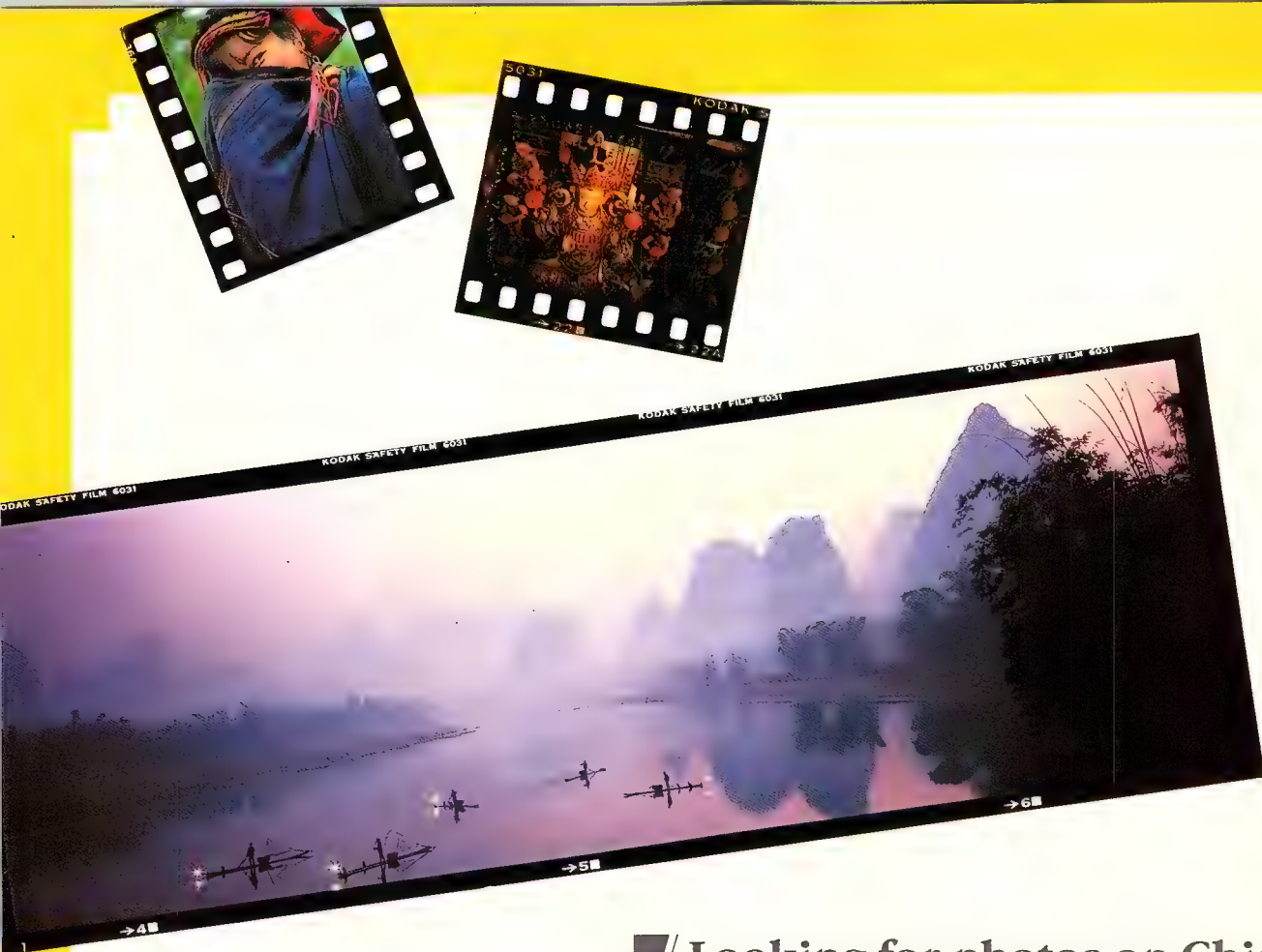
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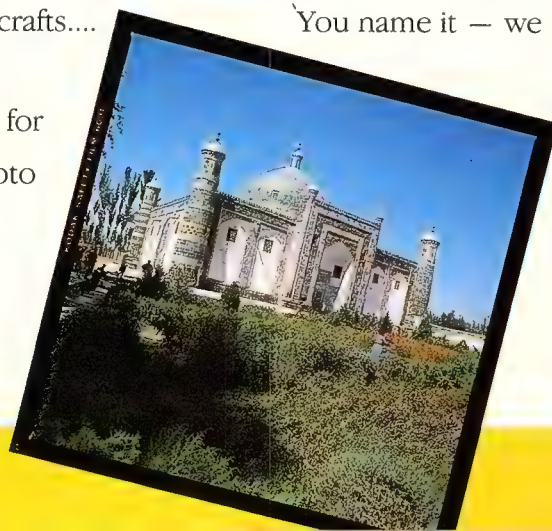
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This dragon has lain coiled around a piece of jade for centuries on a brick from the ruins of the Xianyang Palace of the Emperor Qin Shihuang.

Dragon and Phoenix in Traditional Chinese Patterns

PHOTOS & ARTICLE BY YANG LIMIN



Another piece of brick excavated from Xianyang Palace depicts a wind god (on the right) riding a phoenix.

When you travel in China, you very often see patterns with the dragon and phoenix as the main theme. It can be said with certainty that the Chinese people are very fond of these mythical creatures and they are, indeed, significant in Chinese culture.

Legend has it that in primitive days, there were two large tribes in China, one in the east led by Emperor Yan and Emperor Huang, the other in the west represented by Chiyao. The totem of the former was a dragon while the latter's was a phoenix. After long years of confrontation, the two tribes were finally united as the Huaxia nationality. The picture of "The Union of Dragon and Phoenix" that we often see today probably originated from that period. It is a sign of unity, peace and harmony and of the good life for which people yearn.

In the Chinese dictionary the dragon is "a mythical animal from the legends of ancient China. It is a long scaly creature with antlers and talons, able to walk, fly and swim. It has the power to gather clouds and create rain". The image of the earliest form of dragon is related to snakes. According to ancient legend, Nüwa, the ancestor of human beings, was a snake with a human head. *Shan Hai Jin (Notes on Mountains and Seas)*, an ancient Chinese work on geography, says, "Nüwa, an ancient mythical woman, was the empress of the time. A snake with a human head, she changed her form seventy times a day." This implies that the dragon began as a deified and personalized snake.

The Dragon as Deity

The character "dragon" appears many times in Shang Dynasty (c. 16-11th century B.C.) inscriptions on bones and tortoise shells unearthed in the Yin ruins of Xiaotun Village, Anyang in Henan. By then, the dragon had already become the symbol of the deity. The pattern of multi-rings appeared in the early Western Zhou Dynasty (c. 11th century-770 B.C.), and later on it was quite common to use patterns with the dragon as the main theme. During the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.), the image of the dragon frequently appeared on bronze ware and jade objects. By the time of the Qin and Han Dynasties (221 B.C.-A.D. 220), the designs on tile ends contained the pictures of dragons. During the Han era in particular, the dragon was further deified and regarded as the first of the four gods, namely, Green Dragon, White Tiger, Scarlet Bird and Sombre Warrior (in the form of a snake and a tortoise). A Han tile end unearthed in Xi'an shows a coiled dragon in a circle, its four talons stretched out. Its scales are in the shape of whorls. The head of the dragon, on the upper part of the tile, looks majestic and militant with a touch of the supernatural. By the time of the Han Dynasty, the image of the dragon had been perfected.

The Sui and Tang periods (581-907) were a turning-point for the dragon. As Buddhism was introduced into China, the image of the dragon changed from a dormant to an active state. At that time, the image of the dragon had by and large

been fixed. The dragon design had been adopted for use on many surfaces, such as on bronze mirrors, buildings and silk fabrics. Decorative objects with a dragon as the sole theme began to appear. A Tang Dynasty (618-907) gilded dragon, now housed in the Shaanxi Provincial Museum, is a rare masterpiece. The material used for this piece of artistic work and the craftsmanship which created it are of superb quality. With its front talons firmly planted on the ground, the dragon seems to have just plunged from the sky, its tail still high up in the air. It has been caught in motion, appearing graceful and sweeping.

The Dragon's Sons

After the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the dragon pattern was more widely used for both decorative and practical purposes mostly by the imperial court. The dragon was usually coloured yellow. In the imperial court, large amounts of gold were used for the making of dragons to show the supreme power of the emperor.

Legend says that the dragon has nine sons, each entrusted to be in charge of a different type of activity. They have different names and different characteristics. The first son, Chaofeng, adventurous by nature, is often depicted as an animal found on the up-turned corner of roofs. The second son, Yazhi, is a fierce creature who always appears with a sword in his mouth. The third son is Bixi, who is good at carrying loads. The common representation of Bixi is as a tortoise carrying a stone tablet. The fourth son, Qiuniu, is fond of music. His image is often used on the necks of fiddles. The fifth son is Suanni who likes smoke, so his likeness is used for the top of incense burners. The sixth son is Chiwen, who loves gazing into the distance. He is often seen on the roof of imperial palaces. The seventh son, Baxia, is fond of water. His image is often used for the water spouts of springs. The eighth son is Pulao who likes roaring, and his image is often used on the top of a clock. The ninth son, Jiayu, is good at guarding and his image is often found on door knockers.

The concept of the dragon gradually changed over the long years of history. It has taken on the features of many animals such as the eyes of an ox, the body of a snake, the scales of fish, the antlers of a deer, the talons of an eagle and the legs of a tiger. It could fly and swim and neither sky nor sea could stop it. After the Han Dynasty, the dragon became the symbol of the emperors who believed that they were incarnations of the dragon and the born rulers of the country. The common people, however, saw the dragon as a symbol of good fortune bringing them blessings and always ready to help them in difficult times, particularly when they were harassed by flood. People prayed for help, too, when there was a drought because they believed that the dragon was able to bring rain.



A Western Zhou jar decorated with phoenix patterns. The lugs allow a cord to be passed through for use as a handle.

The Magic Bird

According to historical records, the phoenix was believed to have magic powers. Deity Tianlao says that in appearance, the phoenix has the front of a roc, the rear of a Chinese unicorn, the neck of a snake, the tail of a fish, the forehead of a crane, the cheek of a mandarin duck, the back of a tortoise with the pattern of a dragon, and the beak of a rooster. These lines describing a phoenix show that it is physically similar to a dragon in many ways and, like the dragon, it was created by people's imagination, ideals, sentiments, concepts and psychology.

The Chinese character for "phoenix" is very beautiful when carved on bones or tortoise shells. It is simply a picture of a bird, such as 凤 and 凰. This character comes from many legends. It was said that the father of Shun, one of the ancient sage emperors, was starving. There was not a single grain of rice in his house. However, he fell asleep and dreamed that he met a phoenix which came to feed him. Later on he had a son whom he called Shun. People believed that Shun was the incarnation of the phoenix, hence an object of worship.

It was long, long ago when the phoenix came into being. Its image was widely used on bronzeware of the Shang and Zhou periods. The phoenix patterns vary and are very well designed. They are concise yet resplendent. Like the dragon, the phoenix is also a symbol of blessings and protection. During the Qin Dynasty (221-207 B.C.), the phoenix image was widely used on bronzeware, buildings and jade. Bricks excavated from the ruins of the imperial palaces built during the Emperor Qin Shihuang's reign, starting from 221 B.C., have a unique phoenix design on them. Some specialists name such designs "Wind God Riding on a Phoenix". The Wind God has a snake, shaped like an "S", on each of his ears. This snake, many argue, is in fact meant to be a dragon. With a dragon on his ear, the Wind God appears more dignified and awe-inspiring. Besides, such designs make him look as if he was moving. The phoenix has a pearl in its beak, its eyes are lustrous, its feathers colourful. It is in full harmony with the Wind God as far as grace, elegance and beauty are concerned.

Symbol of Imperial Women

The phoenix was regarded as one of the four deities during the Han Dynasty. Also known as Scarlet Bird, a symbol of the south and of summer, it was widely used on tile ends, bricks, stone painting and bronzeware. The hollow bricks with the phoenix carved on them unearthed in Maoling, from the mausoleum of Han Emperor Wudi in Shaanxi, are believed to have been made during the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 24). The whole picture is very well composed. The phoenix,

carved in bas-relief, has a simple and rustically executed body with its feathers represented only by simple lines. It looks light and sweeping. Lines are harmoniously exploited to highlight some parts of the picture. The phoenix seems most relaxed and on the point of dancing.

By the time of the Sui and Tang Dynasties, a prosperous period, the phoenix began to be symbolic of the imperial house. Already regarded as king of the world of birds, the phoenix became the symbol of empresses and imperial concubines for only the phoenix could match the dragon. From then on, the status of the phoenix was



The back of a Tang bronze mirror with phoenix and mandarin ducks



Dragon relief carving on a hollow Han brick (by Qin Bo)



Scarlet bird pattern on a hollow brick from Han Emperor Wudi's mausoleum



A phoenix crown of the Ming Dynasty

greatly enhanced. Decorative objects with a phoenix on them were much used by ladies of the imperial house, hence the "phoenix crown" and "phoenix pin". It was no longer a sign everybody could use. Such concepts were handed down to later dynasties, and after the Song Dynasty, the image of the phoenix became even more idealistic. It was intermittently perfected, and decorative articles became even more resplendent. One example is the "phoenix crown" of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) now housed in the Fufeng County Museum in Shaanxi.

Today, the image of both dragon and phoenix are no longer the privilege of rulers, nor incarnations of gods nor symbols of emperors and empresses. They are, instead, symbols of good fortune, synonyms of ideals and beauty, the spirit of the nation. ☐

Translated by Wang Mingjie

Sunset in the Land of Waters

Photographer: TSANG HIN-TING





At day's end these fishermen are on their way home across the golden waters of the Xiaobei River in northern Guangdong.





All the Teas in China

PHOTOS BY ALEX TAI ARTICLE BY M. FRANCES CHAN



In China, where the drinking of tea has a long history, the taste in tea differs in different areas. Generally speaking, people living in hotter areas prefer green tea while those in colder places favour dark tea. People in Beijing like their tea steaming hot and scented with flowers, and minority people living near the border areas prefer rich dark tea from highly compressed bricks of tea leaves. The people of Fujian, and the Chaozhou and Shantou areas of eastern Guangdong pay special care to both their tea and tea ware. Guangdong and Fujian people like green tea, and one of the teas favoured by them is the fine Oolong tea, especially the Tieguanyin (Iron Guanyin Buddha) variety, mainly produced in these two provinces and in Taiwan.

A warm, humid climate and hills with gentle slopes and good drainage are best for growing tea, so it is not surprising that the world's major tea growing areas lie in Asia.

Distribution of tea plantations in China can roughly be divided into four areas: north, central, south and southwest.

The northern area, which is north of the Yangtse (Changjiang) River, includes southern Shaanxi, north central Anhui, and the northern parts of Jiangsu, Hubei, Henan, Shandong, Gansu and Sichuan. These areas have a cold winter and, therefore, the tea is picked only in spring and autumn.

The central area lies mainly south of the middle and lower reaches of the Changjiang and includes Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Hunan, the southern portions of Anhui, Hubei and Jiangsu, and northern Fujian. This is China's major tea growing region. Here, quality tea is grown ex-



Shown in the top picture are two rolls of calabash tea produced by monasteries in the Zijin County area of Guangdong Province. The tea is said to have a medicinal value. Other teas, from left to right, are Sow Mee white tea, Oolong tea with jasmine and black tea with roses.

Nine varieties of Wuyi Rock Tea are available in this tea house (above) in the Wuyi Mountains in Fujian. The two green rows of figures are the prices in yuan per pot and per cup. The most expensive is the 'Great Red Robe'. (by Huang Hailing)

There are many tea plantations in Wuyuan in northeastern Jiangxi. The largest one, shown on the right, is in Wujiang Town. (by Li Qing)



sively and can be picked all year round except in winter. The southwestern area includes Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan and southern Tibet. The climate here is also suitable with its mild weather. This area, incidentally, also enjoys a wide distribution of wild teas.

The southern region, which includes Guangdong, Guangxi, Taiwan, Hainan Island and southern Fujian, enjoys a warm winter and long summer, and thus a long growing period. Guangdong's Yingde County along the Beijiang River is one of China's many tea rich regions. The tea produced here is black, with its fragrant, mellow taste and which, like all black tea, is good for digestion.

North of Yingde, upstream along the Beijiang River, is the county of Lechang which produces a kind of white tea. The back of its long leaves are covered with white down which gives it its name. According to an old tale, Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) was touring the area when he fell ill at the Jiufeng Mountain in Lechang. The local people brought him some strong white tea brewed on the mountain, and he recovered in a very short time. The tea, of pale honey colour, is the most white tea, is very refreshing and invigorating, so it is said, revitalizing. It is also very good after a heavy meal.

The province's best green tea is grown on the Fenghuang (Phoenix) Mountain of Zhaozhou, an ancient city in eastern Guangdong. The 1,300-metre mountain is constantly shrouded in the mist that moisturizes its cross-cutting valleys. The tea produced here is Oolong, sometimes with mixed flowers. The best of the flower teas can be produced only in the spring and in comparatively small amounts. The tea grown on this mountain is collectively referred to as Fenghuang tea.

These are among Guangdong's best teas, but the province exports a wider variety such as black tea scented with roses and dried peach, and the Pu'er variety which usually comes from Yunnan but which is also produced in Guangdong. Green teas such as Oolong and others scented with jasmine or orchid are also produced in Guangdong.

Fujian produces green, black and white teas which are among the major exports of the province. The most famous is the green tea grown in the Wuyi Mountains, in Anxi in southern Fujian, and jasmine tea produced in Fuzhou.

Wuyi Rock Tea is the general term given to the green tea grown around Chong'an County at the southern foot of the mountains in northern Fujian. These consist mainly of several varieties of Oolong tea. An outstanding variety is one named "Great Red Robe". It is said that only one fresh leaf can turn a cup of hot water into fragrant reddish tea.

Combining the fragrance of green tea and the mellowness of black tea, together with other Wuyi teas and Anxi's Tieguanyin, are the best of China's Oolong.

Fujian's Anxi, just northwest of Quanzhou city, is famous for its Oolong tea variety called Tieguanyin, the best in the country. After treatment, the leaves coil up in an elegant spiral and taste like orchids. It is likened to Guanyin, a Buddha known for her gentleness and elegance. "Tie" means iron, which is almost the colour of the leaves. In Fujian and eastern Guangdong, people still like to drink Tieguanyin and other Oolong teas in the traditional way by using a small, delicate ceramic pot and cup. The pot is first heated up and filled three quarters full with tea leaves; then boiling water is poured in. The Tieguanyin tea

is believed to have been first discovered in Anxi. Now the county's Pingzhou Basin, which is misty all year round, is covered with tea plantations.

Any fragrant and sweet smelling or sweet tasting flower can be used to scent tea. Even though you can team them up yourself, the so called flower tea produced in China is usually fine green tea combined with jasmine, osmanthus, rose, orchid, plum blossom or magnolia. Of these, jasmine is the most popular. Only buds are used as they give out the richest fragrance. Timing is very important as the buds flower quickly and must be picked about an hour before they begin to flower. The warm climate and rich soil of Fuzhou is very suitable for growing jasmine. Fuzhou also has a long history of flavoring tea with flowers, and China's best jasmine tea is produced there.

Some of Fujian's best dark teas include that grown around Xingcun Village in the Wuyi Mountains and the Gongfu variety which is best produced in Zhenghe, Fuding and Shouning counties.

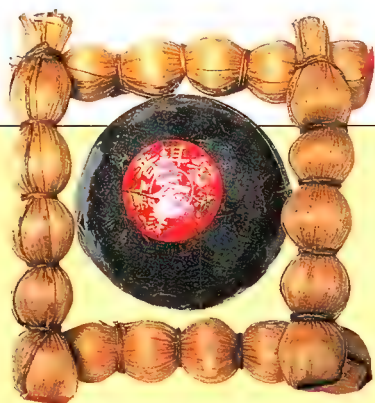
In the past, China's northern areas generally lagged some way behind in the quality of tea when compared to that produced in the south. But, in recent years, transplantation has changed all that. Now Shandong is one of the northern provinces that successfully produces some of the fine teas that are grown in Fujian and other southern areas.



A Dai girl is picking tea in Xishuangbanna's Menghai County in southern Yunnan. The entire area is famous for its Pu'er black tea. (by Peng Zhenge)



Sieving tea leaves (left) in a tea factory in Jiangxi's Wuyuan. (by Li Qing)



Framed by rolls of calabash tea is a round cake of compressed Tuocha tea (left), one of the finest Pu'er varieties. The tea is so compressed that it has to be pried loose with a knife.

Boxes of tea bags (below left) are also available from China including Tieguanyin Oolong tea, factory produced calabash tea, and Yingde, Guangdong's best black tea.

Six Major Teas

China's teas can be classified into six major categories according to the method of processing and the quality of the teas. Each also has a large number of varieties.

Green Tea

The leaves for green tea have to be heated at high temperature to prevent them from fermenting. This also preserves the natural green colour. Apart from those produced in Fujian, other fine green teas are produced in the hills overlooking Zhejiang's idyllic West Lake, at Hunan's Lake Dongting, and on Huangshan Mountain in southern Anhui.

Dark Tea

Dark tea, on the other hand, has to be aired, curled, fermented and fried. Among its varieties, the Gongfu (meaning something like workmanship and effort) is a delicately produced fine tea. The best dark tea is produced in southern Anhui, Fujian and Guangdong.

Oolong Tea

Oolong is basically more of a green tea, but it is half fermented and is regarded by the Chinese in a category of its own. The manufacturing processes include airing, fermenting, frying, curling and drying. The tea is both fragrant and mellow, taking on a golden tinge. The major



production that it is now regarded as a separate category. For the scenting process, about fifteen kilograms of flowers are first used for every fifty kilograms of tea. Layers of tea are alternated with layers of flowers and are drawn for four or five hours before the flowers and tea leaves are mixed. Then they are left for several hours more until the floral fragrance is absorbed by the leaves. The flowers are then discarded and the leaves are baked. After that, fresh flowers, fewer this time, are added to complete the process. The best jasmine tea from Fuzhou is produced by repeating the scenting process nine or ten times. By comparison, most scented tea is processed only two or three times.

Compressed Tea

This is usually dark tea, but it has gained such significance that it is now regarded in a separate category. The tea leaves are steam-pressed into a tight brick or cake. The most famous compressed teas are Tuocha or Pu'er varieties produced in Yunnan. The Pu'er tea is interesting in that it is compressed into rectangles, squares, hearts and bowl shaped bricks.



Running a small business involves curling tea by hand in Yunnan's Pu'er County which gives its famous black tea its name. (by Peng Zhenge)

Oolong tea production is in Fujian, Guangdong and Taiwan.

White Tea

This is not fermented or curled.

The tea leaves are whitish in colour and often in the shape of small, light feathers. The tea produced is either a pale honey colour or greenish yellow.

Flower Tea

This is usually green tea scented with fragrant flowers, usually fresh. It has become such a major pro-

How it all Started

There is a Chinese legend about the origins of tea drinking. According to the story, Emperor Sheng Nong, one of China's "fathers", noticed that some leaves had fallen into a pot of boiling water. The aroma encouraged him to take a sip. He did, and by so doing, he wrote the first page of a 5,000-year history.

Of course, you may prefer another story, this one dating back to the 6th century. Bodhidharma, the famous Buddhist monk from India, was at the Shaolin Temple near Luoyang, the temple otherwise famous as the legendary birthplace of *gongfu*. While meditating, Bodhidharma fell asleep. When he



Packed in attractive tins are Wuyi's Shuixian and Tieguanyin teas.

Some of China's Teaware

Among the most famous of China teaware are those made from *zisha*, purple clay, from the town of Dingshu in Yixing, which lies close to Lake Taihu in southern Jiangsu. It is said that tea brewed in these yixing purple clay teapots has a distinctive fragrance and flavour owing to the special properties of the clay. Apparently, owing to the absorbent capacity, when a teapot is used over a long period of time to make one particular tea variety, the flavour of the leaves becomes 'locked' into the walls of the pot. After a while, one no longer needs to add more leaves, just boiling water. Nor does tea go bad or turn sour if left in the pot overnight. In addition, these pots do not crack when placed over direct heat or when boiling water is poured into them.

Teaware and other pieces for everyday use are produced by the Yixing Purple Sandware Factory which also makes teapots and cups purely for display.

Other famous teaware from China includes that produced in Jiangxi's Jingdezhen which is the country's largest producer of ceramic wares for everyday use.

In southern China, Guangdong's most famous ceramic products are the porcelain of Guangzhou and Chaozhou. Guangzhou's coloured glaze porcelain is characterised by its pattern of great details and bright colours, often trimmed with golden lines.


Chaozhou in eastern Guangdong has been producing porcelain for a long time. Fengxi, a town in southern Chaozhou, is famous for the highly skilled art of porcelain carving as well as for its ceramics such as cinnabar teaware which, together with Yixing's purple clay teaware, are particularly suitable for brewing Gongfu black tea.



Purple clay teapots displayed in a teaware stall near Yixing in Jiangsu. There are many such stalls and shops in the area.



Fujian's most famous teaware are those produced in Dehua and Jianyang counties. Dehua is situated in the hills of southern Fujian and produces the best porcelain in the province — white porcelain that is lustrous and thin. Teaware is one of the major products.

In Jianyang in the mountainous area of northern Fujian is the Jian kiln which produces black glazed porcelain. The major product has always been small cups which are referred to as the Jian cups. They are praised in many Song Dynasty (960-1279) books including *The Grand Book of Tea* by the Song Emperor Huizong and another that says, "The tea cups made in ...Fujian...are much valued by tea lovers." 

In Taiwan's Kaohsiung City, the owner (centre in the picture above) of this shop, that sells antique and other interesting items, serves tea to the photographer and his friends with a set of 100-year-old teaware which is used for drinking Gongfu tea.

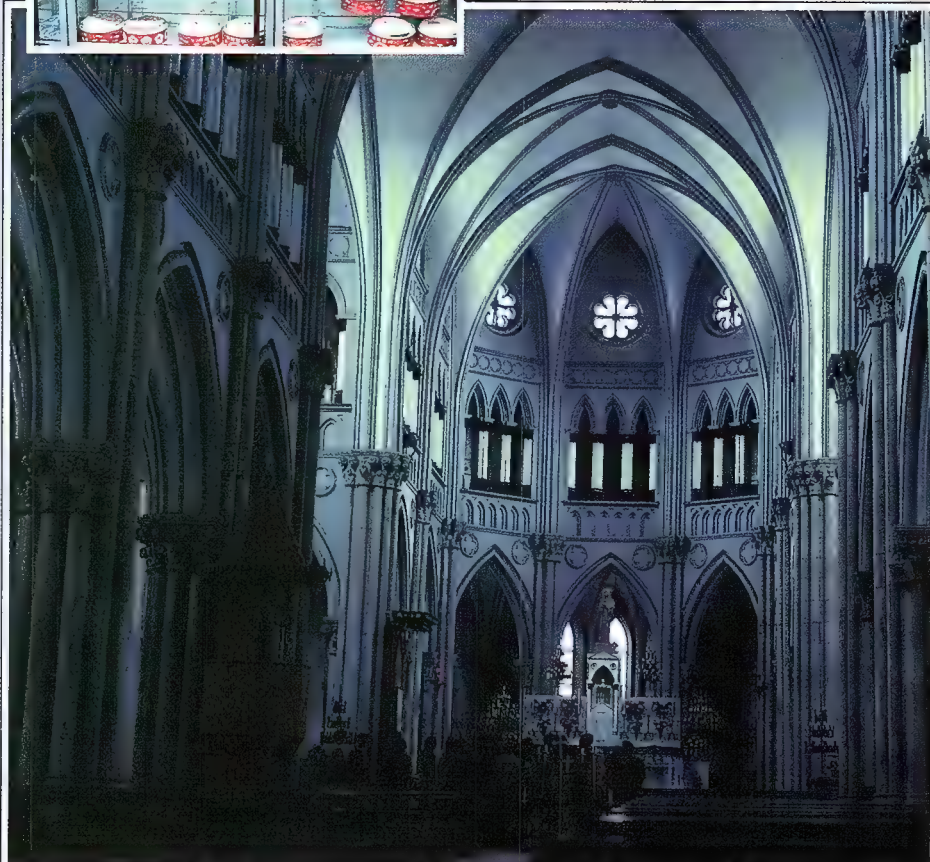
Shanghai Revisited

In recent years, with the increasing opening up of China to foreigners, large numbers of travellers from all over the world have taken the opportunity of exploring the many and varied cities and provinces of China. Certain areas of the country have quickly established themselves as favourites with visitors. Amongst these must be included Guilin with its amazing rock formations and caves, Xi'an, home of the terracotta warrior statues, and, of course, Beijing, capital throughout most of the Ming and Qing dynasties and re-established as the nation's capital in 1949.

It is probably true to say that these places are attractive for the foreign visitor because they appear so essentially and uniquely Chinese. Each represents, in a different way, something of what most visitors to China somehow expect to see, whether it be the natural wonders of Guilin (familiar from traditional Chinese art) or the man-made wonders of the world's most ancient continuous civilization. There is one place however which, although featured on a good many travellers' itineraries, does not fit into this pattern. It contains little of natural beauty, while its architecture for the most part owes more to 19th and 20th-century Europe than to ancient China. I refer, of course, to Shanghai.

There seems little doubt that Shanghai is one of the more popular destinations in China with foreign visitors; at any rate it is consistently included in many package tours. This, I suspect, is because of, rather than in spite of, its somewhat 'foreign' appearance. For visitors who have spent a good deal of time and energy taking in the sights of such places as Guilin or Xi'an, it must come as something of a welcome break to arrive in Shanghai. It is the feeling of reassurance that comes with the familiar. It can almost feel like coming home. Here is a place that looks and even sounds like a Western city, not of the 1990s perhaps, more like forty or so years ago, of the time when many of today's foreign visitors were in their childhood or not even born. Here, surely, lies part of the attraction of Shanghai for the foreign visitor.

Of course much of the lifestyle of pre-Liberation Shanghai has disappeared and it is as well that it has. Enough remains of the architecture, however, to allow one's imagination to go back to the days when Shanghai was known to some as the 'Paris of the Orient'. And it is not just the architecture that survives. In the Coffee Shop of the Peace (formerly Cathay) Hotel, a jazz band still plays creditable renditions of 1940s hits; along Nanjing Road can still be found the best shopping in China; some of the older hotels, particularly the Park, Jinjiang and Peace, offer an ambience which, if a little faded, can never be matched by a modern establishment; while an evening stroll along the tree-lined Bund (the promenade fronting on to





3



4

the Huangpu River) can be a memorable end to a day's sightseeing.

Despite being a big and bustling city (the population of Greater Shanghai is around twelve million), it is not difficult for the foreign visitor with a little initiative to find his or her way around without having to join a conducted tour. Maps in English are available from hotels and tourist offices. The city has a relatively simple layout with most of the places likely to interest being located either near the Bund (now known officially as Zhongshan Dong 1-Lu) or along Nanjing Lu or Huaihai Zhonglu. These latter two roads are major communication routes running westwards from the city centre. As an added bonus, the street name signs are written in Romanized Pinyin as well as simplified Chinese characters, making map-reading easy. The more adventurous visitor could try making use of the cheap, frequent (but usually crowded) buses and trolleybuses which ply these and other routes throughout the city. Once again maps of the bus routes are available and, when one has worked out the system, they are easy to use. Fares are collected on board and tickets issued by conductresses who sit near the doors.

As important as a good map is a good guide book. There are several in print, includ-

ing at least one which is a reprint of a guide published originally in the 1930s. Although of not much use for understanding what facilities the city has to offer at present, such a guide can provide a real insight into pre-Liberation Shanghai.

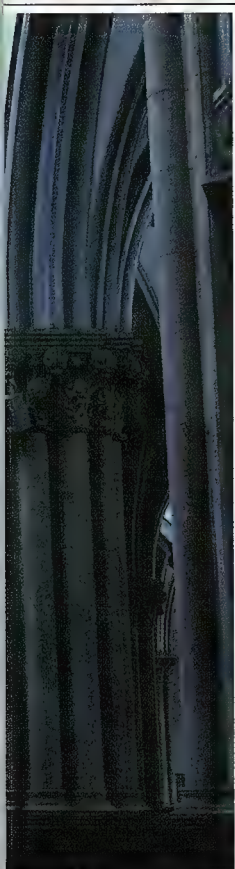
It also helps to identify the original use of the surviving buildings from that era. So much of the former downtown business district alongside and behind the Bund, remains structurally intact that a study of these old buildings and their former uses can provide many hours of fascination for the student of history or architecture. The skyline of the Bund and Nanjing Road is still largely as it has been for decades. The eighteen-storey Park Hotel (the tallest building in the East when opened in 1934) still overlooks Nanjing Road and the People's Park (formerly the race-course). The Bund is still dominated by the imposing Customs House (built in 1927) with its distinctive clock tower, while next door the People's Municipal Government Headquarters now occupies premises formerly used by the Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation and opened as such in 1921. On one corner of the Bund and Nanjing Road stands the Peace Hotel, while its annexe across the road on the opposite corner is the former Palace Hotel dating, according to the date carved in the stone-work above the entrance, from 1906.

The whole area from the Peace Hotel to the former Shanghai Club at the southern end of the Bund recently saw use as one enormous filmset which will be familiar to those who saw the movie *Empire of the Sun*. This was set in Japanese-occupied Shanghai during the Pacific War and based upon the novel of the same name by J.G. Ballard. Also featured in the film, in the opening sequences, was the Catholic cathedral of St Ignatius in the Xujiahui area. This is situated some miles from the city centre but is near the outer terminus of the route 26 trolleybus.

This is only a sample of the interesting sights that Shanghai has to offer the perceptive visitor. With a map and a guide book, an interesting few days can be spent discovering more of the history of this unique city.

Andrew Stables

A cake shop on Nanjing Road (1); the nave of the Catholic cathedral of St Ignatius (2); the view north along the Bund, with the former Shanghai Club to the left and the Customs House and clock tower at far right (3); the City No. 1 Department Store, dating from the 1930s, originally the Sun Department Store (4).



At the Birthplace of the Yangtse



Photo by Zheng Yunfeng

Climate

It is cold, sunny, windy, and snow-covered. It is a land of roaring thunder, exploding frost and gale force winds. It is home to both the stolid yak and the loveliest of flowers. It is the Tanggula Range in Haixi, Qinghai Province, and it is the place where the Yangtse begins its ride through China.

Because of the altitude, some 5,800 metres, the average temperature is about zero degrees Celsius all year round. It is only at the 5,000-metre mark or so that the temperature begins to rise, although not by much. For instance, at 4,534 metres, on the bank of the Tuotuo River along the Qinghai-Tibet Highway, the average temperature rises to only 7.5°C in the middle of July.

Snow and frost are common during the summer months as the temperatures tend to drop down to freezing in the pre-dawn hours. This is true even where afternoon temperatures can reach a spring-like 15°C.

Sudden and drastic changes in weather are commonplace at this altitude and can take place several times on the same day. Intense summer sunshine helps to produce a profusion of flowers, and yet thunderstorms are common. In fact, thunder is recorded on an average of eleven to sixteen days per month. During the winter, vicious gale force

winds prevail, making this one of the most battered areas in China.

Due to the high altitude and the powerful air currents that blow at great velocity in the sky above the Qinghai-Tibet Highland, higher temperature is recorded near the ground. As a result of the temperature differences between ground level and the sky, strong circular air streams are formed, drawing high velocity currents downwards, creating the easterly gale force winds that rip the area.

While a visit here is usually safe, you can sometimes be caught by surprise.

One of the landscape features created by permafrost are the forests of huge stone slabs. These large rocks were pushed into a vertical position when the frozen earth expanded and moved. Another fascinating and beautiful landscape feature are "ice cones". During winter, water from rivers and springs rises and flows on the surface. At times, the water freezes vertically, shining glaring white in the sun.

The Ubiquitous Yak

Beside being the homeland of the Yangtse, the area is also home to nomadic Tibetan herders whose yaks feed, clothe and shelter the herdsmen and their families.

The yak is a relatively primitive highland species that has survived the passing of time. In China, yaks have been domesticated for over 4,000 years. The animal has a highly developed heart and its body contains an exceptionally high amount of protein — rich red blood cells which allow it to thrive, run and haul heavy objects where the oxygen content of the atmosphere is very low. Besides having hide and fur that are extremely good insulators, yaks stay warm in cold weather due to the ability of their skin tissue to store fat. The animal's not so well-developed sweat glands also help prevent the loss of body heat.

Yaks have very high economic value. Their milk, meat, fur and hide are all useful materials. Even its droppings are used as fuel. They can also climb high mountains with precipitous slopes and uncover food from beneath the snow-covered ground. Hence, they have become a major form of transportation in the cold highland.

The Permafrost

Some of the special landscape features in the area are formed as result of permafrost.

What danger there is comes from the frost mounds filled with frozen water. The permafrost is loaded with water, and when it freezes and expands, the earth above is pushed up, forming into small dome-shaped mounds. These frost mounds vary in size. The biggest one found so far stands twenty metres and is located on the Qinghai-Tibet Highway near the Kunlun Range. Furthermore, it is growing at a rate of about twenty-seven centimetres in height and 1.6 metres in diameter every year. The mounds can be dangerous due to their unpredictable eruptions. Unlike volcanos that spit fire and lava, frost mounds explode and release pillars of water. They are also called "water volcanoes".

On the west slope of the Tanggula Range (near the place of origin of the Yangtse River), for instance, there once existed a frost mound 2 to 3 meters wide and 1 metre high. One day it suddenly shot out a pillar of water that rose about a metre into the air. The water spewed out for a few minutes before the whole mound exploded. Rocks were thrown into the sky, some landing as far as seventy metres away. Within the next three days, three more "water volcanoes" erupted, leaving behind tremendous holes in the ground.

Translated by Ursula Yeung

Source of the Changjiang River



The Changjiang (also known as the Yangtze) River is the longest river in China and the third longest in the world. For centuries, opinions on the source of the river varied as no one had really reached its true source. This was due to the fact that it is deep in the back-land of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and is quite inaccessible.

For more than 1,000 years, from the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) on, it was believed that the Minjiang River in Sichuan was the main source of the Changjiang River. During the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 24), Zhang Qian, special envoy to the Western Region, reached the Tongtian River in Qinghai by raft, and the famous Ming Dynasty geographer and traveller Xu Xiake (1568-1641) got down the Tongtian to the Jinsha River flowing through Sichuan, Tibet and Yunnan. Although both men got closer than others had been to the main headstream of the Changjiang River, they were still hundreds of kilometres away from it.

In 1956, an expedition exploring the source of the Changjiang River arrived at Qumarlêb County in Qinghai and found that the Changjiang River had two headstreams: the southern headstream, Muluwusu, starting at the northern piedmont of the Tanggula Mountains, and the southern headstream, Qumar, starting at the southern piedmont of the Hohxil Mountains. This time, the true source of the Changjiang River was close at hand but still not reached.

In 1977, another team explored the area for more than a month, finally tracing the source of the Changjiang River.

Now, we are riding on a coach heading southwestward along the Qinghai-Tibet

Highway. After passing through the Qaidam Basin and crossing the Kunlun Mountains, 5,000 metres above sea level, we enter the area where the Changjiang River begins its tumultuous ride through China. The Kunlun Mountains, the Tanggula Mountains, the Hohxil Mountains and the Jurhen Mountains surround the area, the vast Hohxil grasslands which lie some 4,000 metres above sea level.

Five large rivers flow here. From north to south they are the Qumar, the Tuotuo, the Gar, the Biqu and the Dam, all of which are sources of the Changjiang River. They flow slowly eastward, meeting to form the Tongtian River.

Which of the five rivers is the main source of the Changjiang River? The result of the exploration is in accordance with the principle that the furthest stream is the head of a river. It is the Tuotuo River, the longest headstream, that is the main source of the Changjiang River.

But where does the Tuotuo River originate? Chasing up the Tuotuo River southward through the valley of the Jurhen Mountains, you get to the snow-covered Gêladaindong, the main peak of the Tanggula Mountains where the Tuotuo River and its progeny, the Changjiang River, actually begin.


Gêladaindong, which means "towering sharp peak" in Tibetan, is 6,621 metres high. It consists of more than fifty huge glaciers covering an area fifty kilometres long from north to south and thirty kilometres from east to west. Clustering around the highest peak are more than twenty snow-covered lesser peaks, all 6,000 metres above sea level. In summer and autumn, ice and snow melt in the sun and many colourful flowers are in full

bloom on the natural grasslands below the snow line. The colours of the flowers and grass here are dazzlingly beautiful owing to the long periods of sunshine and the especially strong ultra violet rays.

Out of the valley, the Tuotuo River suddenly descends, forming a five-kilometre canyon lined on both banks by precipitous cliffs rising more than twenty metres into the air. The river down Badong Mountains gradually widens, eventually forming a seven-kilometre-wide alluvial flat. Then the river flows northward through the long and narrow valley of the Jurhen Mountains, turning east at Lake Hulu. To this point, the Tuotuo River has already run more than 130 kilometres.

After turning east, the Tuotuo River widens again. When it reaches the town of Tuotuoheyan on the Qinghai-Tibet Highway, the river is 270 metres wide and three metres deep with a current velocity of two metres per second. The famous First Bridge Spanning the Changjiang River is situated here.

Tuotuoheyan, 4,700 metres above sea level, is the first small town in the source area of the Changjiang River. It used to be a desolate and uninhabited area, and became a small town with a population of nearly 10,000 only after the Qinghai-Tibet Highway was open to traffic in 1954.

From Tuotuoheyan, the Tuotuo River continues flowing east. When it reaches Nangjibalong, it is wedged between high ridges — the river course being only thirty metres wide in sharp contrast with the 200-metre-wide valley through which it runs. It is here that the 375-kilometre-long Tuotuo River meets the other three important tributaries — the Damqu, the Biqu and the Gar. Together they form the Tongtian River — the upper reach of the Changjiang, one of the world's great rivers. 

Translated by Chen Jiaji


(Continued from page 25)

Bronzeware at Chalang Temple, Darlag

made him grow a face each time he gazed at the object of his desires. On the other hand, there are those who see the sculpture as a representation of the Supreme Yoga stage, the highest of the four stages of the esoteric school. Whatever its origins, it reflects the popularity of such a figure in Tibetan Buddhism and looks very similar to the Buddhist images from the esoteric school in India.

Besides the bronze sculptures, there is a small pagoda in the Nepalese style. The Buddhist statues, both inside and outside the pagoda, are less than three centimetres high, yet they are elaborately sculpted, portraying beautiful details of clothing and they are fine representations of Buddhist art. The pagoda itself shows the mental state of the Buddha. Through the open work of the pagoda one can see the Buddha seated cross-legged in meditation in an

effort to achieve peace of mind. A living Buddha of the lamasery told us that the small pagoda has a history of over one thousand years. It was probably introduced at the beginning of the spread of Buddhism and was finally stored at the Chalang Temple.

It is said that the architectural style of the Tibetan pagoda has evolved from the style of the small pagoda such as the one above. The neck has changed into thirteen storeys representing the thirteen regions. The body is studded with Buddhist images, and thus becomes the hall for storing the scriptures and the lotus base has changed into the square or rhomboid-shaped foundation. All these changes can be seen in the small pagoda. 

Translated by Anne Yan

Tips for Travelling to Sichuan's *Mt. Emei*



Photo by Wu Jian

Sichuan's Mt. Emei is a mountain resort famous for its serene beauty. It is located at the southwest corner of Emei County which, in turn, perches on the southwestern rim of the Sichuan Basin.

Transportation

The most convenient route is via the provincial capital of Chengdu and from there by bus. There are three ways to get to Chengdu from Hong Kong.

1. Direct Flight: A CAAC charter flight leaves Hong Kong for Chengdu every Wednesday and Saturday. Air fare for this two-hour flight is HK\$1,480 plus airport tax of HK\$150. Tickets are obtainable from the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) ticketing counters at Ground Floor, 17 Queen's Road Central, Central (Tel: 840-1199) and Ground Floor, Hankow Centre, 4 Ashley Road, Tsimshatsui (Tel: 739-0022). Tickets can also be booked through one of the many travel agents in Hong Kong.

2. Flights from Guangzhou: Travellers can also go to Guangzhou and fly from there to Chengdu. There are twenty flights leaving Guangzhou for Chengdu every week and not less than two per day. On Tuesdays and Sundays there are four flights a day. Flight time is approximately two hours, and the fare is about HK\$805. Tickets can be obtained from the ticket counters of CAAC, China Travel Service (CTS), China International Travel Service (CITS) and other travel agencies in Hong Kong. There may be a slight difference in prices quoted by the different companies.

Travellers already in Guangzhou can purchase their tickets directly from the CAAC counter located in the CAAC Ticketing Building on the eastern side of the Station Square (Tel: 662969). Tickets are sold here at ¥430 and there is no extra service charge.

Generally speaking, the chance of getting a ticket here is quite good except during festivals and holidays.

3. By Train via Guangzhou: Direct fast train number 252/253 travels between Guangzhou and Chengdu. It leaves Guangzhou every other day and arrives at Chengdu at 8:17 am on the fourth day. Tickets for a hard sleeper cost HK\$395 at Guangzhou Railway Travel Services in Hong Kong, China Travel Service and other travel agencies. A week's advance booking is usually necessary.

The return air ticket to Guangzhou can be bought in Chengdu from the ticket counters of China's Southwest Airline at number 15, section 2 of Renmin Nanlu (opposite the Jinjiang Guesthouse minibus stop). It would be best to buy the return ticket or have your hotel do it for you before you leave for Mt. Emei. Telephone inquiries are entertained at 23038.

For a seat on one of the two weekly direct return flights to Hong Kong (on Wednesdays and Saturdays), the place to go is Room 129 of Jinjiang Guesthouse or call 28225.

From Chengdu, there are three ways of reaching Mt. Emei.

1. By Rail: Five trains travelling the Chengdu-Kunming route leave Chengdu for the county of Emei daily. Tickets are obtainable from the ticketing room located on the western side of the Chengdu Railway Station on Renminbeilu. There is usually a huge crowd in the ticketing room, so be careful of pickpockets.

2. By Bus: Four buses leave Chengdu for Emei every day, and you can purchase tickets at the Xinnanmen Bus Terminus on Linjiang Lu. Other smaller district bus companies also have similar services. On top of these basic services, special tourists buses leave every morning at 8:00 am from

Xinnanmen Bus Terminus, Beimen Bus Terminus and the Bus Terminus at the Northern Rail Station, but this service tends to be irregular and depends heavily on the number of tourists who require it. The buses are generally more dependable during tourist season.

3. Joining Local Tours: There are over ten local travel agencies located at the southwestern corner of the Railway Station Square. All of them offer 3-day Mt. Emei tours which cover transportation to and from Mt. Emei as well as very brief visits to all major scenic spots on the mountain.

Touring Mt. Emei

Use Baoguo Temple as the starting point. It can be easily reached by bus or minibus from Emei County or the Emei Railway Station.

The walk from Baoguo Temple to the Jinding (Golden Peak), is 60.5 kilometres and the altitude rises from 550 to 3,077 metres.

It is best to stay the first night at Xianfeng Temple at 1,752 metres above sea level and 33 kilometres from Baoguo Temple. Xianfeng Temple is the activity centre for the famous Emei monkeys. The second night is best spent on Jinding Peak itself as it is the best site for seeing the sunrise, the sea of clouds and the "Buddhist halo". "Buddhist halo" can most likely be seen on a clear sunny autumn or winter afternoon between 2:00 and 6:00 pm when the middle and low mountains are submerged in the clouds. Standing on Jinding Peak with the sun's rays shining from the back, you can see dancing figures embraced by multi-coloured halos against a backdrop of clouds.

A modern cable car system has been built to connect the Jieyin Hall at 2,540 metres and the Golden Peak at 3,048 metres. This cable car system covers an alti-



Photo by Lin Meng

The cable car connecting Jieyin Hall at one end and the Golden Peak at the other offers travellers a spectacular view (far left) and, for easier travel at lower altitudes, there are the bamboo sedan chairs carried on the shoulders of local men (below).

The people of Mt. Emei still blow ancient bamboo horns (centre) to help ensure good weather, a bumper crop and long life. Each horn consists of twenty-four joints to symbolize the number of solar terms per year, according to the traditional Chinese calendar.



Photo by Chen Jin

ude difference of 508 metres, a distance which requires two hours to cover on foot. n five minutes, the cable car can take 40 persons up the mountain. It is China's highest cable car with the longest span and which covers the steepest gradient. Fares are ¥8 for ascending and for ¥6 for descending.

The Golden Temple on Golden Peak, destroyed in a fire, was rebuilt and restored last year to its original grand style.

A unique mode of transport on Mt. Emei is the bamboo sedan. The passenger sits in a bamboo chair fastened between two big bamboo stems carried up the hill by a man at each end. This bamboo sedan is organized by local farmers and is usually available in the middle and lower parts of Mt. Emei near Qingyin Pavilion. Prices vary and are usually set after bargaining.

Accommodations

Like the transportation, accommodations on Mt. Emei are equally convenient. Almost all temples and monasteries offer food and board for tourists. There are also the accommodation facilities provide by individual farmers and residents. Altogether, there are almost 8,000 beds on Mt. Emei which can answer demands even during peak seasons. Boarding charges are relatively cheap, around ¥3 to ¥5 per bed. Apart from those whose telephone numbers are given below, there are eighteen other accommodation points.

Emei Guesthouse, Tel: 2552 (of better quality)

Hongzhushan Guesthouse, Tel: 2430 (of better quality)

Baoguo Temple Food and Accommodation Point, Tel: 2295

Fuhu Temple Food and Accommodation Point, Tel: 2579



Train Schedules Chengdu - Emei - Jinjiang - Kunming

545 O.	389 O.	321 O.	93 Exp.	91 Exp.	Train Station No.	92 Exp.	94 Exp.	322 O.	390 O.	546 O.
09:47	07:49	18:02	16:00	22:07	Chengdu	13:20	09:15	07:44	19:43	17:34
12:18	09:31	20:00	-	-	Melshan	-	-	05:42	17:35	14:59
13:23	10:24	20:49	-	00:26	Jiajiang	10:55	-	04:52	16:22	13:55
14:05	10:54	21:17	18:41	00:54	Emei	10:03	06:19	04:24	15:53	13:22
14:34	11:22	21:44	19:07	01:20	Yangang	09:44	06:04	04:09	15:35	13:06
18:09	13:49	00:20	-	03:39	Wushihe	07:18	-	01:09	12:54	09:18
21:58	16:55	03:58	00:11	06:43	Puxiong	04:58	01:31	22:19	10:29	6:00
19:19	06:19	-	-	-	Lugu	-	-	19:48	07:56	
20:19	07:39	-	-	09:53	Xichang	01:16	22:23	18:41	07:01	
21:46	08:52	-	-	-	Dechang	-	-	17:08	05:33	
23:14	11:12	06:55	13:20	-	Jinjiang	21:08	18:33	14:20	02:54	
02:12	-	08:51	-	-	Yuanmou	-	16:35	-	00:40	
05:24	-	12:00	-	-	Guangtong	-	14:45	-	22:48	
06:25	-	12:51	-	-	Lufeng	-	13:26	-	21:18	
09:10	-	15:30	-	-	Kunming	-	11:20	-	18:50	

Exp. — Express
O. — Ordinary passenger train

Flights to and from Chengdu in Sichuan

Route	Days of Week	Dep.	Arr.	Flight No.
Hong Kong - Chengdu	3 6	17:30	19:30	SZ4004
		11:20	13:20	SZ4002
Chengdu - Hong Kong	3 6	14:25	16:40	SZ4003
		08:15	10:30	SZ4001
Guangzhou - Chengdu	1	15:40	17:55	SZ4312
	3	15:30	17:45	SZ4322
	3	19:45	21:55	SZ4340
	4	16:30	18:45	SZ4326
	6	17:30	19:45	SZ4314
	7	15:55	18:00	SZ4352
	2	10:30	12:45	SZ4318
	5 7	09:55	12:10	SZ4304
	1 2 4	15:00	17:10	SZ4302
	2 5 7	08:05	10:20	CZ3403
	2 3 5 6	07:00	09:00	SZ4306
Chengdu - Guangzhou	1	12:55	14:55	SZ4311
	3	07:15	09:15	SZ4339
	4	07:00	09:00	SZ4325
	6	14:45	16:45	SZ4313
	2	07:40	09:35	SZ4317
	5 7	07:15	09:10	SZ4303
	1 2 4	12:10	14:10	SZ4301
	2 5 7	11:15	13:40	CZ3404
	2 3 5 6	07:00	09:00	SZ4305

The Twin Lakes of the Yellow River



Photo by Zheng Yunfeng

Baihai, the "Sea of Tibet", is the collective name for Gyaring and Ngoring Lakes on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. The Tibetans have lived and raised their yaks in the lakes area as long as anyone can remember. The western lake, Gyaring, means "the long white lake", and the eastern lake, Ngoring, means "the blue-green lake".

The two lakes, situated between the A'nyemaqên and Bayanhar Mountains west of Madoi, are some ten kilometres from each other and twenty kilometres from Lake Xingxiu. Gyaring, shaped like a gourd, covers an area of 550 square kilometres. The middle of the lake is a yellowish colour because of the water from the Yellow River which passes through it in a west to south-easterly direction.

Gyaring stands at an altitude of 4293.93 metres above sea level and is nearly thirteen metres deep.

Its sister lake, the triangularly-shaped Ngoring, is 618 square kilometres in area. The Yellow River enters Ngoring from the west and flows out in a northerly direction. The lake lies at 4271.34 metres and, at nearly 31 metres in the deepest spot, is much deeper than Gyaring.


In the centre of Lake Ngoring is an island, famous for its colonies of migrating birds. They arrive in May and fill the area with their songs, especially at twilight just before they fall asleep. The birds also sing just before a storm hits, perhaps as a warning to other birds to stay "at home" and ride out the storm. The white goose, cormorant and brown-headed gull are the largest of the flocks that use Lake Ngoring as their breeding grounds.

The two lakes also teem with many species of fish, some of which live a very long time. They can reach a weight of seven kilos in their old age.

Tibetans do not eat fish. As a result, many fishermen come from other places, es-

pecially Gansu and Sichuan, to fish these relatively unfished waters. The Tibetans have, however, found another use for these abundant creatures. After being dried on the rocks that line the lake, the fish, along with dried yak dung, are used as fuel for cooking and heating.

In the winter, the fishermen cut holes in the ice so that they can fish all year round. Certain species of the fish eat aquatic plants which the local people call *shuigu* (water cereal). When the ice is thin, you can see through it and observe the fish eating.

The lakes appear to be very peaceful, but sometimes they are disturbed by the violent storms that rack the Himalayas. However, the storms soon pass, and the twin lakes are once again serene, two watery jewels against the backdrop of the great mountains. 

Qinghai's Cities and Counties Open to Foreign Tourists

Dulan C	都蘭縣
Gangca C	剛察縣
(Bird's Island on Lake Qinghai)	(青海湖鳥島)
Golmud	格爾木市
Gonghe C	共和縣
Guide C	貴德縣
Hualong Hui AC	化隆回族自治縣
Huangzhong C	湟中縣
(Ta'er Temple)	(塔爾寺)
Jainca C	尖扎縣
Ledu C	樂都縣
Madoi C	瑪多縣
Tongren C	同仁縣
Ulan C	烏蘭縣
Xining	西寧市
Xunhua Salar AC	循化撒拉族自治縣

Note: C - County
AC - Autonomous County

The Yangtse and the Yellow -


Two Great Rivers

In China the Yangtse is called Changjiang, the Great River, because it is the longest in China and the third longest in the world after the Nile and the Amazon. It runs 6,390 kilometres from its source in the Gêladaindong Glacier in the Tanggula Mountains, snaking through the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau where it is first known as the Tuotuo River before it changes its name to the Tongtian.

The river races southeast at great speed as it becomes the Jinshajiang (Golden Sand River), then it turns to the north where it finally becomes the Changjiang in Yibin, Sichuan Province. There, where it passes through the famous Three Gorges, the river bed is 150-180 metres deep, making this the world's deepest river bed.

The Yangtse irrigates the great rice fields of China as it flows into the China Sea just north of Shanghai, adding 34,000 cubic metres of water to the sea each second. Other statistics on the Yangtse are equally amazing. The river irrigates some two million square kilometres of land, the home of 350-400 million people, and it carries 300 million tonnes of alluvial deposit to the sea each year.

The Yellow River, China's second river, while smaller than the Yangtse, still runs 5,464 kilometres. Its source is in the same area as the Yangtse but more to the northeast on the slopes of the Bayanhar Mountains. The River runs north, making a big loop in Inner Mongolia before flowing into Bohai Gulf.

Although smaller than the Yangtse, the Yellow River may be better known because it is intimately linked with Chinese history and civilisation. On this river, we find the oldest human settlements in China, and the river is often considered the cradle of Chinese civilisation. 

Tours Around Wuxi and Jiangxi

This year, Wuxi offers the following tours:

- * Sailing up the Grand Canal
- * A Night on the Grand Canal
- * Moon watching at the Mid-Autumn Festival at Lake Taihu
- * Fireworks on the Sea

Jiangxi Province will offer the following from May to the end of the year:

- * Porcelain Festival at Jingdezhe
- * A Visit to Lake Poyang
- * Plum Blossom Festival

Three Grand International Festivals in Hunan

Hunan Province will be the venue for three international festivals in 1991. The first is the Dragon Boat Festival (16-18 June), an international dragon boat competition that will take place on the Miluo River in the village of Yueyang. Occurring at the same time is the Zongzi Festival. It is noted for the triangular-shaped rice cakes served during this commemorative celebration honouring the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) poet Qu Yuan who committed suicide in the river to protest corruption. Boats from Japan, Australia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan have been invited to participate in the competition.

The second is an international fireworks festival. The fireworks of Hunan are very well known throughout China. This year, from 8-10 September, the festival will light up Changsha by displaying fireworks from all over the world.

The third festival is to celebrate the international movement to protect the world's forests. It will be held in Zhangjiajie, the site of China's first national park, from 8-12 November. Before the festival, meetings, visits and boat trips on the river rapids will be organised.

New Air Routes Announced

A new Beijing-Foshan (Guandong Province) route via Fuzhou (Fujian Province), has been announced by China United Airlines. Foshan is an old city near Canton and Fuzhou is the capital of Fujian. One round trip each Friday has been scheduled.

The Beijing-Xiamen-Jakarta route, officially opening 23 April, 1991, has been announced by Air China. The flights depart from Beijing on Tuesdays and Fridays at 10:55 a.m. and from Xiamen at 14:40 hours, arriving in Jakarta at 18:30 hours. The return flight departs Jakarta on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 8:55 a.m., Xiamen at 16:00 hours, and arrives in Beijing at 18:25 hours.

International Pomegranate Festival

The International Pomegranate Festival will take place in Lintong, 30 kilometres northeast of Xi'an, from the 10-14 of September. Xi'an, capital city of the Sui and Tang Dynasties (581-907) has welcomed tourists since the 1970's. During the festival, tourists can visit the pomegranate groves on Mount Lishan, take photos in front of the pomegranate tree allegedly grown by the famous Tang concubine Yang Yuhuan, admire theme paintings and calligraphy, and attend a cultural seminar on the Qin and Tang Dynasties or a seminar on pomegranates.

The Museum of the Silk Route of the Sea

A museum of the Silk Route of the Sea has opened in Quanzhou, historic port city of Fujian Province and one of the oldest commercial cities in China. Since the times of the Song and Yuan Dynasties (960-1368), the city has maintained maritime connections with more than a hundred cities and regions. The nine-storey museum is in the shape of an ancient Chinese sailing junk. Among the museum's treasures are the remains of a 13th-century ocean going ship discovered in Quanzhou in the 1970's. The museum also contains steles with inscriptions from the different religions practised by the foreign merchants over the last ten centuries.

A Mongol Festival in Preparation

Preparations are under way for the *Nadam*, the great festival of the nomadic Mongols, which will begin around the fifteenth of August. On the program are: horse races, archery contests, singing, dancing and a fair. During the ten days of the festival, the organising authorities will also offer automotive and airplane excursions so that fairgoers can discover the Mongolian steppes.

A Chinese Tourism Competition

Radio Beijing (Air China), the local government of Chengde and the National Tourist Bureau have organised a radio contest in forty languages. Meant for foreign listeners and overseas Chinese, the contest consists of ten questions on travel organised by the Chinese Tourist Authority. Five first prizes are a one week tour of Beijing and Chengde, the largest imperial palace city in Hebei.

Grasslands Fete

Preparations are now under way for a tourism festival to be held in August on the grasslands of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

A regional officer in charge of tourism stated that festival activities will include horse racing, archery, wrestling and other sports commonly enjoyed by the Mongolian people. During the ten-day event, tourists will also be able to enjoy musical performances at the fair or take a bus or plane tour around the region.

Showcase Village

A village displaying exhibits of the culture, folk customs and life of twenty-one of China's ethnic minorities will open on 1 October. The village in Senzhen has twenty-two architectural groupings, each of which reflects the distinctive national flavour and style of each of the minorities represented. In addition, the village will have a museum for the display of folk life, costumes and the special arts and crafts of China's fifty-six different nationalities.

Set Price at Sheraton Shanghai

The Sheraton Hua Ting Hotel in Shanghai is now offering a fixed price for long-term guests with a 10% reduction on food and a 20% reduction on a number of services. There is free admission to the night club and the health centre. Other special offers are: the long term rate for business people is U.S. \$79.00 from 1 April to 15 November, and the room rate for the same period for those attending seminars is U.S. \$95.00 per day.

Japanese Motorcyclists on the Silk Road

A ten-year agreement has reportedly been signed between the China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC) and Japan's Anton Corporation. The subject of the agreement is the 'Sino-Japanese Silk Road Motorcycle Tour', which is to start in July 1991. The motorcycle tour will cover a different part of the ancient Silk Road in north-western China each year. The section for 1991 is the 1,430-kilometre stretch between Urümqi in Xinjiang and the Jiayu Pass, the westernmost point of the Great Wall, in Gansu.

Wuyi Mountains Lure Visitors

The lovely Wuyi Mountains on the northern borders of Fujian Province are drawing ever more tourists as access, transport and accommodation facilities are improved and extended. Designated as one of China's key tourism areas in 1979, in the intervening decade some 86 hotels have been built, many with IDD telephone links. The main resort centre is in southern Chong'an County. The introduction of a train service between Fuzhou and Nanping and air services between Wuyi, Fuzhou and Nanjing has made access easier. Special activities offered in the mountain region include mountain-climbing, motorcycle tours, archaeology tours, and introductions to the local folk culture. Places of interest include the Wuyi Nature Reserve and the Snake Zoo, which exhibits reptiles and conducts research on venom.

NEXT ISSUE

XI'AN AND CENTRAL SHAAHAI

Xi'an is central Shaanxi Province's historic capital and the first capital of the Han, Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. It was the starting point of the Silk Road and today's Xi'an attracts visitors from all over the world. It is a city of history and culture, with many historical sites, including the Terracotta Army and the Great Wall of China.

- A Plain Full of Mausoleums

- Qin Zhang Emperor's Home Since Antiquity

- Ancient Metropolis of Chang'an

- The Final Home of Emperors

- Every day Life in Xi'an

- Ambience of Shaanxi

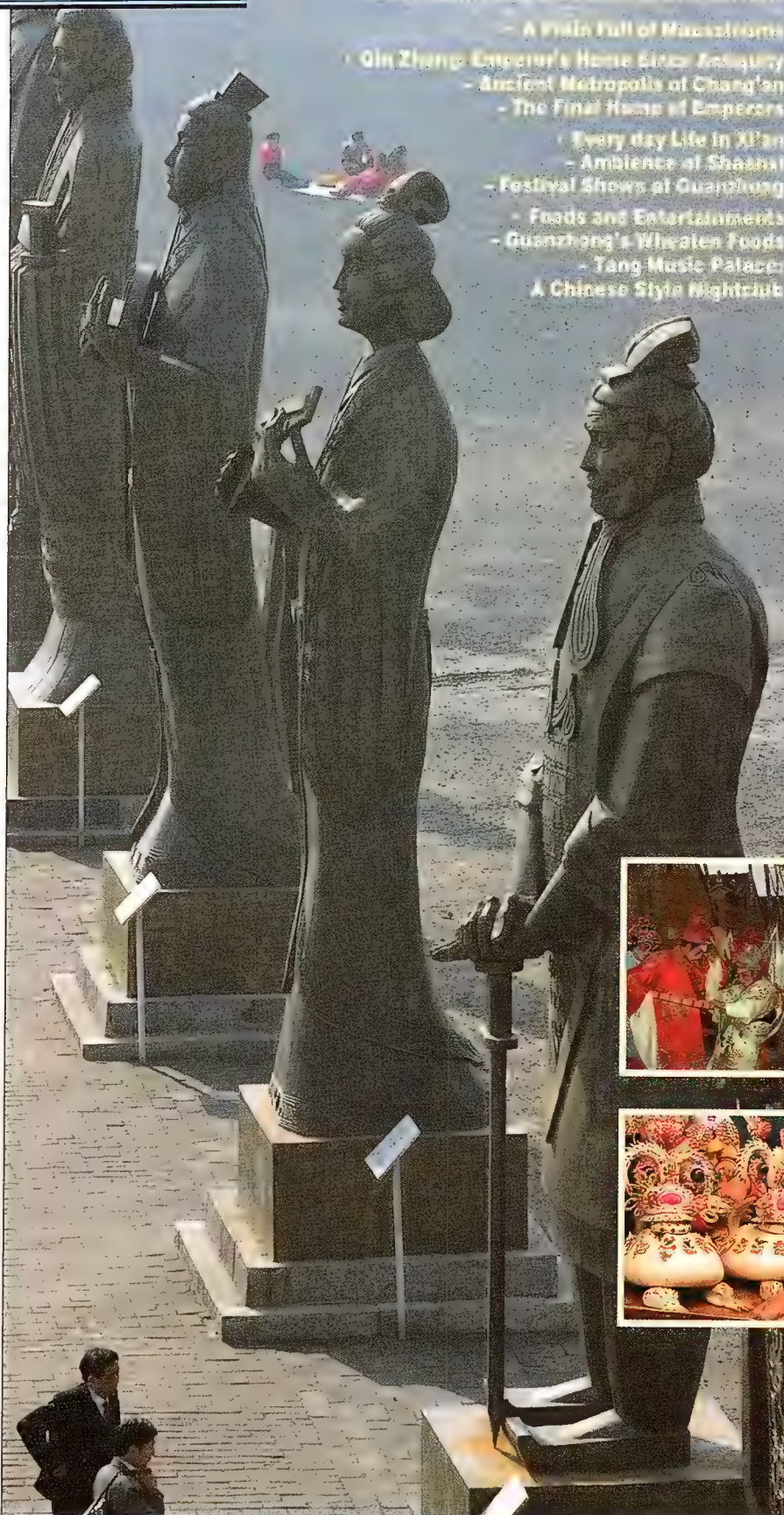
- Festival Shows at Quanzhong

- Foods and Entertainment

- Quanzhong's Wheaten Foods

- Tang Music Palace

- A Chinese Style Nightclub



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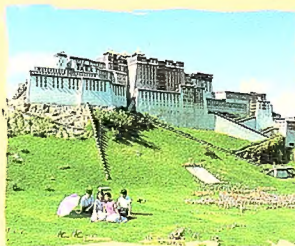
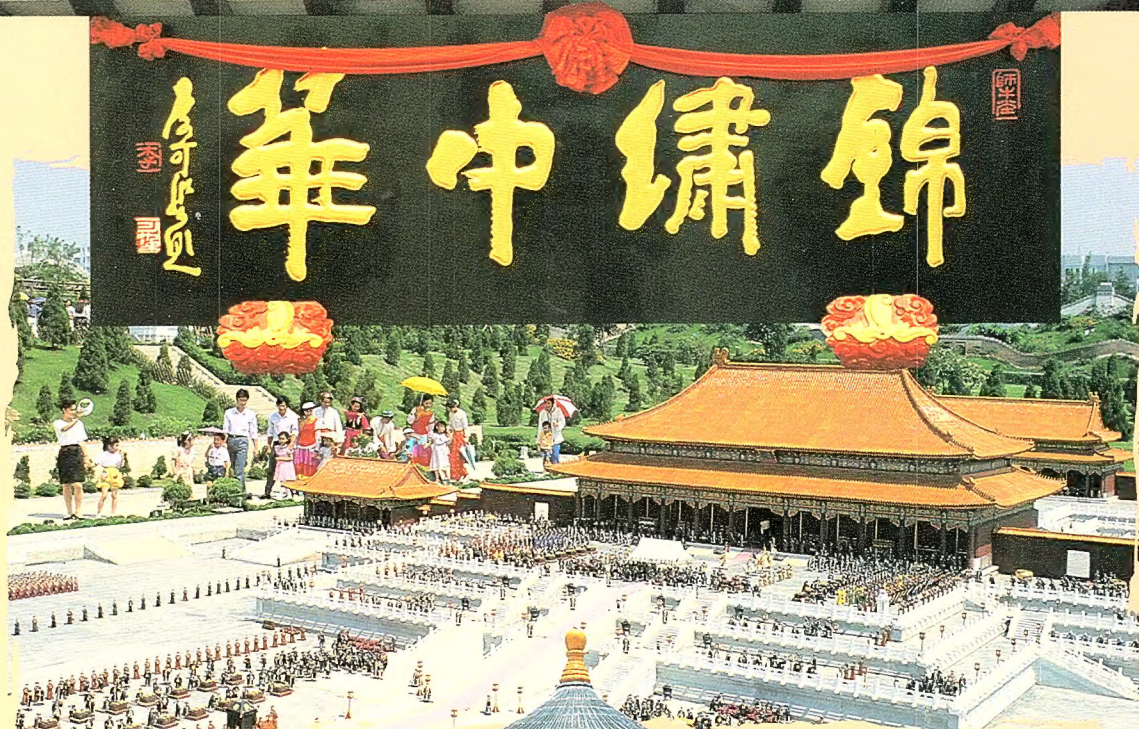
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